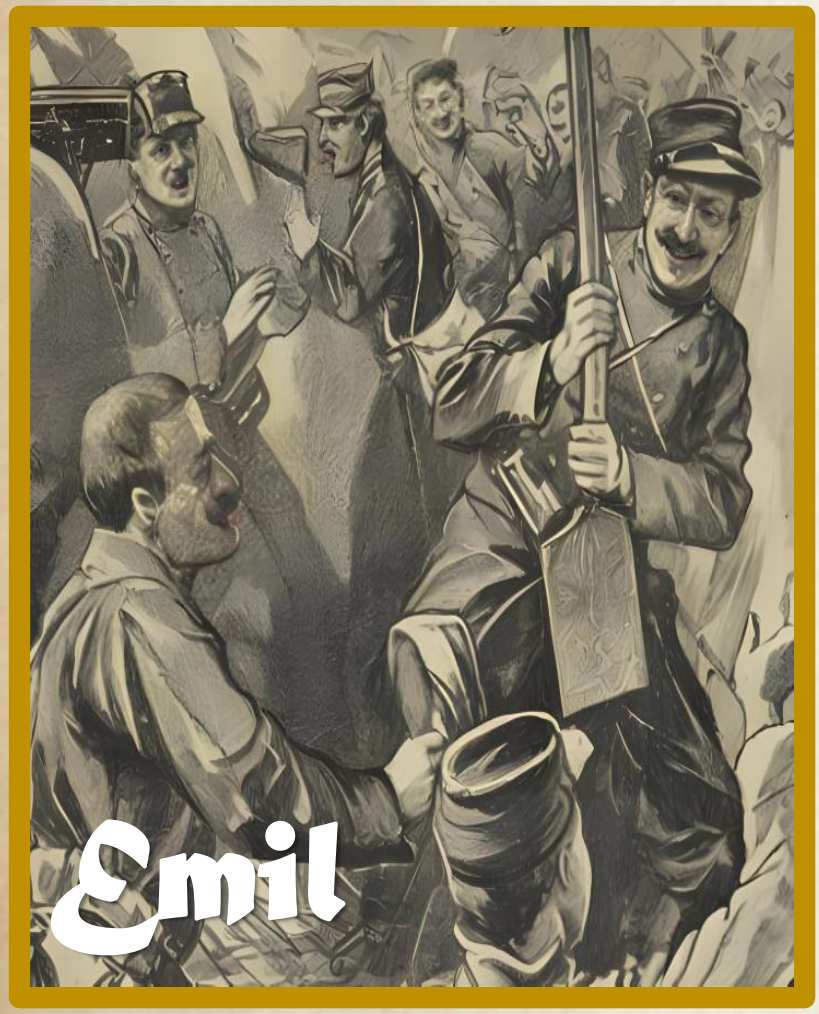


ON THE DAY BEFORE

THE GUNS FELL SILENT

10 November 1918

GIOVANNI METRO

STOP GALLERY

WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. SINGAPORE - 2025

As the sun reached its zenith, both armies appeared to pause in a moment of tacit agreement, granting themselves a brief respite from the relentless clamor of battle.

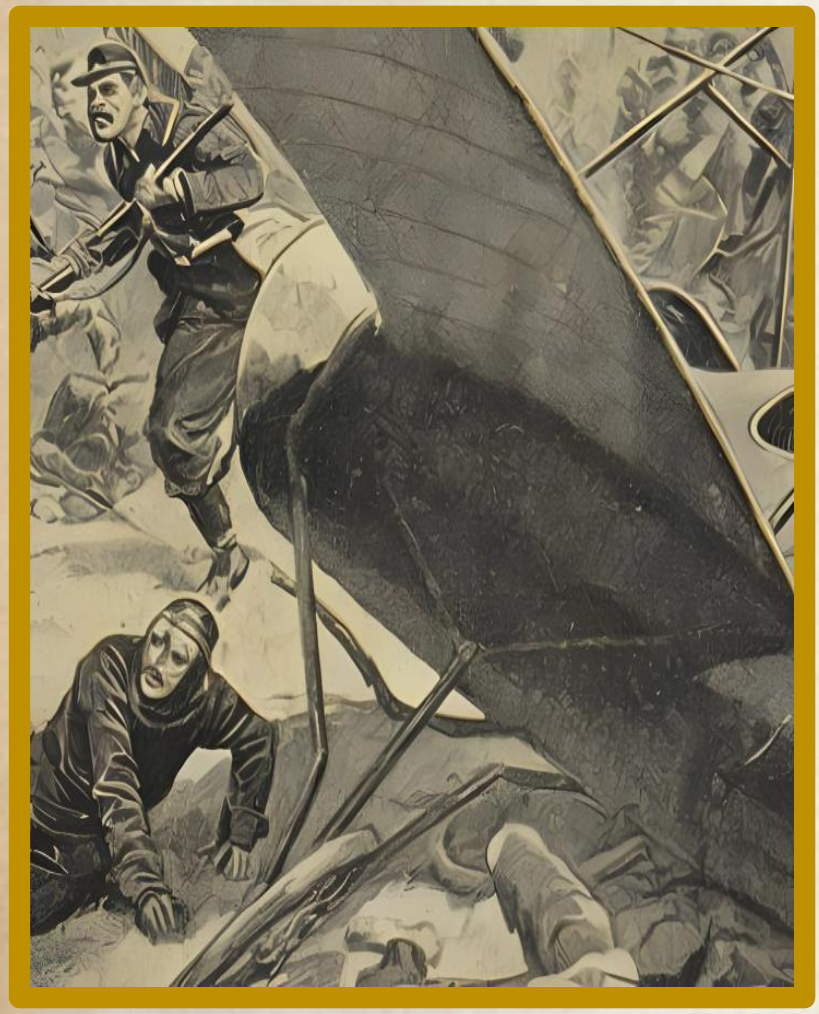
It was as though an unseen commander had signaled a temporary halt, allowing the soldiers to catch their breath and regroup.

Behind the ridge, the French forces lay in formation, their ranks shimmering under the intense midday sun, which cast a harsh light over the landscape.

This interlude, marked by the stillness of the air and the distant sounds of the battlefield, provided a stark contrast to the chaos that had preceded it, as the soldiers took advantage of this rare opportunity to rest and prepare for the inevitable resumption of hostilities.

The atmosphere was thick with tension, yet for a fleeting moment, the weight of the impending conflict seemed to lift, allowing the armies to reflect on the gravity of their situation amid the sweltering heat.

In the expansive and undulating

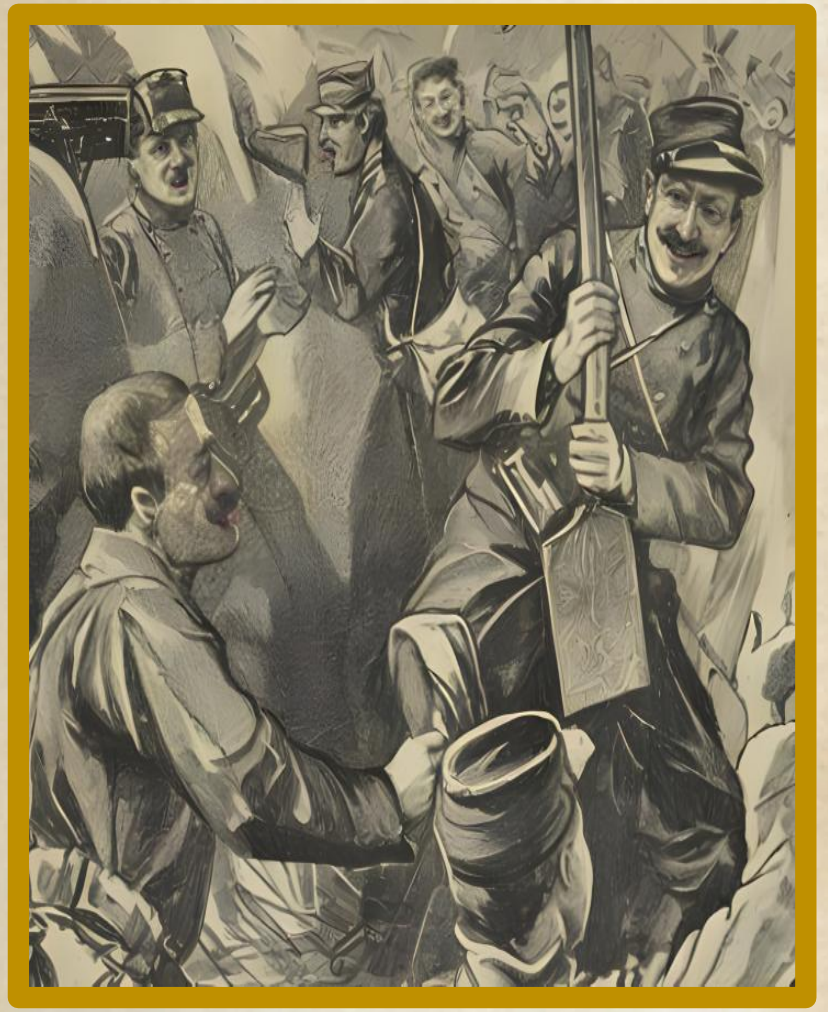


valley, a stark contrast emerged as the faint, azure-hued, sinuous lines delineated the position of their adversaries, although they remained safely beyond the reach of direct confrontation.

This distant outline, barely perceptible against the backdrop of the landscape, served as a reminder of the looming threat that lay ahead.

The gentle rise and fall of the terrain created a natural barrier, obscuring the enemy's movements while simultaneously providing a strategic vantage point for those

observing from a distance.
The interplay of light and shadow across the valley further accentuated the ethereal quality of the scene, as the wavering lines seemed to dance in the breeze, embodying both the uncertainty and the tension that characterized the standoff.
It was not until the clock struck two that I noticed the general standing solitary, his gaze fixed intently on the enemy's position.
His demeanor was one of palpable impatience, as he rhythmically tapped his foot against the ground, a subtle yet telling sign of his



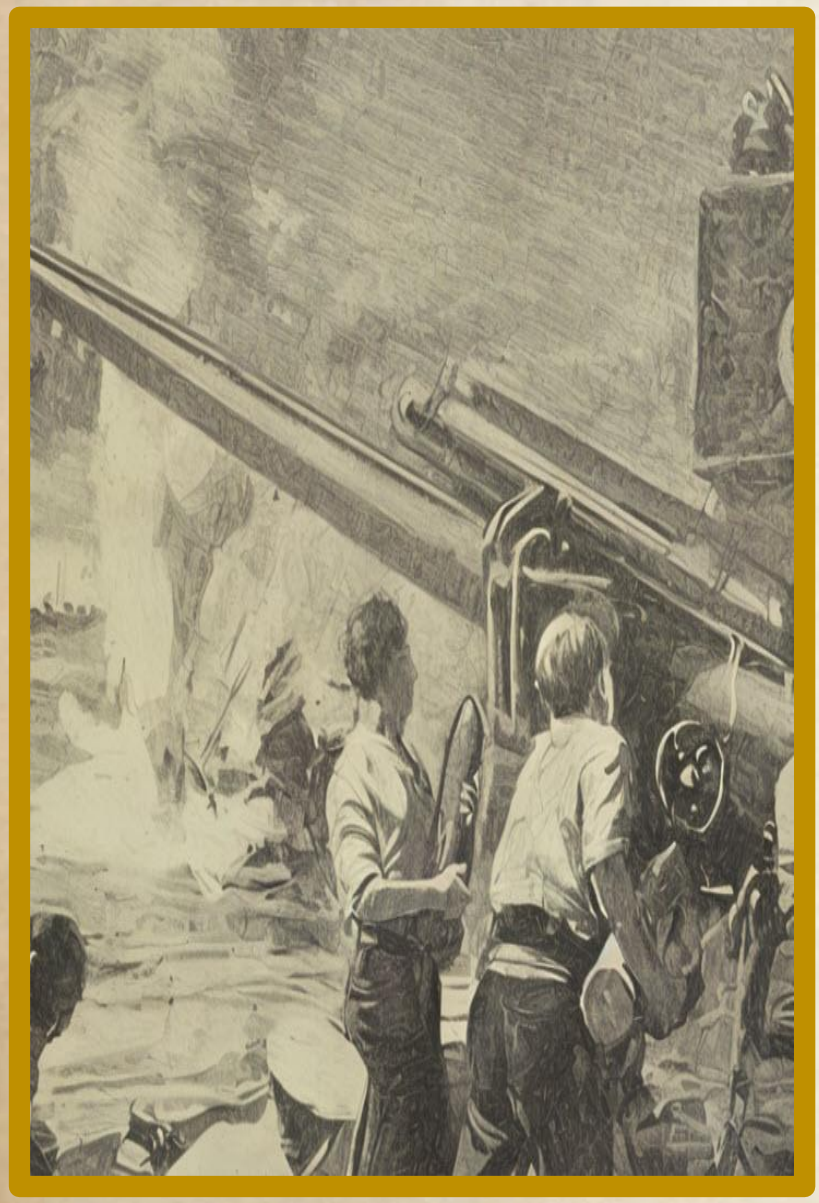
agitation.
Suddenly, a look of relief washed over his face, prompting him to pivot sharply towards his orderly dragoon.
With a decisive gesture, he commanded the soldier to fetch his horse, indicating a readiness to engage with the unfolding situation.
The tension in the air was thick, underscoring the gravity of the moment as the general prepared to take action amid the looming threat.
As the tension in the air reached a

palpable peak, the German infantry began their advance, moving with a calculated precision that reflected their extensive training and discipline.

Each soldier, clad in the distinctive uniform of the Wehrmacht, synchronized their movements, creating a formidable line that stretched across the battlefield.

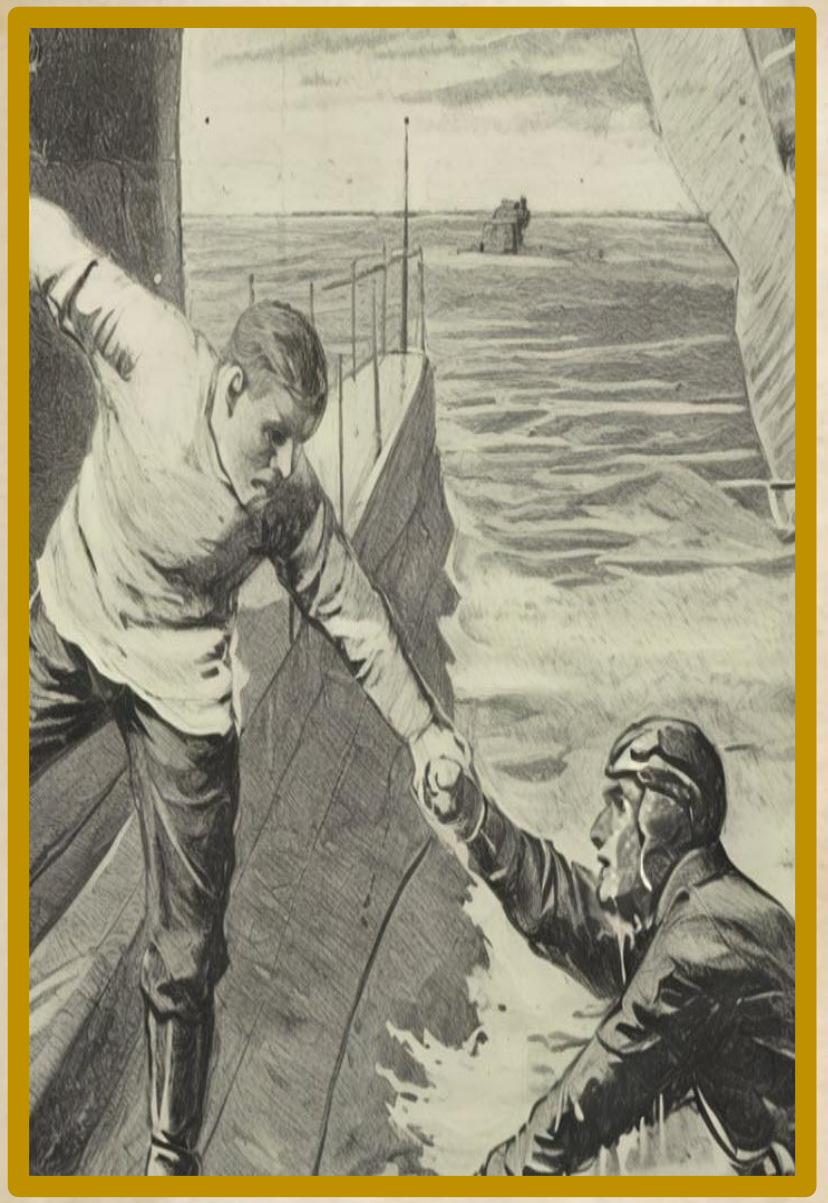
The rhythmic sound of boots striking the ground resonated through the landscape, a stark reminder of the impending confrontation.

With their weapons at the ready and eyes fixed on the horizon, the



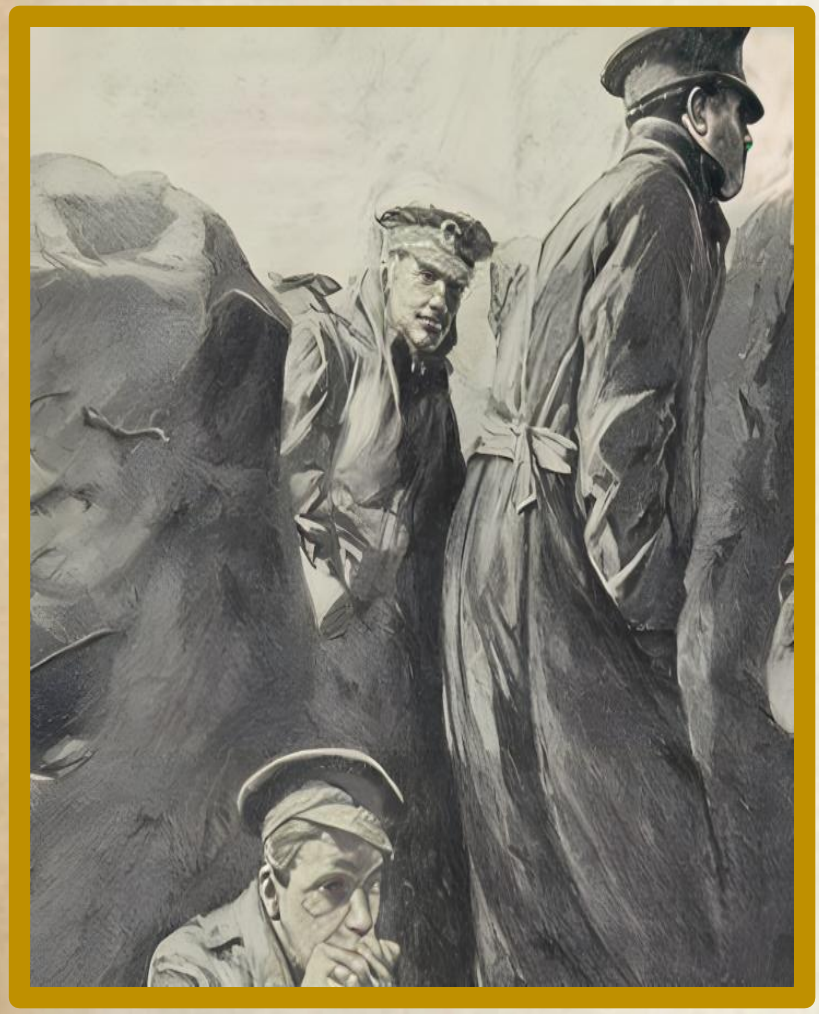
troops navigated the terrain with a blend of caution and determination, fully aware of the challenges that lay ahead.
The atmosphere was charged with anticipation, as the infantry prepared to engage in a conflict that would test their resolve and strategic acumen, marking a significant moment in the unfolding narrative of war.
The artillery had been engaged in relentless combat for an extended period, unleashing a devastating barrage of shells that violently disrupted the once-smooth terrain of the ridge.

The air was thick with the sound of explosions, as each shell detonated, sending debris and earth flying in all directions.
As the intensity of the bombardment escalated, our artillery units began to withdraw systematically, one after another, in a strategic retreat.
This gradual pullback was not merely a reaction to the overwhelming firepower directed at them but also a calculated maneuver to preserve their remaining strength and reposition for a more advantageous stance in the ongoing conflict.



The landscape, once a serene expanse, now bore the scars of warfare, marked by craters and chaos, reflecting the fierce struggle that had unfolded.
The tension in the air is palpable, a heavy weight that seems to press down on everyone present.
The sounds of battle ebb and flow, with the sharp crack of gunfire punctuating the ominous rumble of cannon fire, which swells dramatically before fading into an unsettling silence.
Time appears to stretch interminably, each passing minute

feeling like an eternity as the troops before us remain stagnant, their advance halted.
Even the artillery, typically a harbinger of chaos, seems to languish in the oppressive heat of the afternoon.
Amidst this scene, where swirling clouds of red dust hover over a landscape marred by violence and despair, the destiny of a nation hangs precariously in the balance.
Despite my efforts to emulate the calm demeanor of the General, I find myself unable to mask the turmoil within, as the weight of the



moment bears down heavily upon me.

A couple of messengers from the command bunkers approached on horseback, their presence marked by urgency, yet they were swiftly dismissed by the general, who maintained an expression devoid of any discernible emotion.

His face remained a stoic mask, betraying no hint of concern or interest in the news they bore.

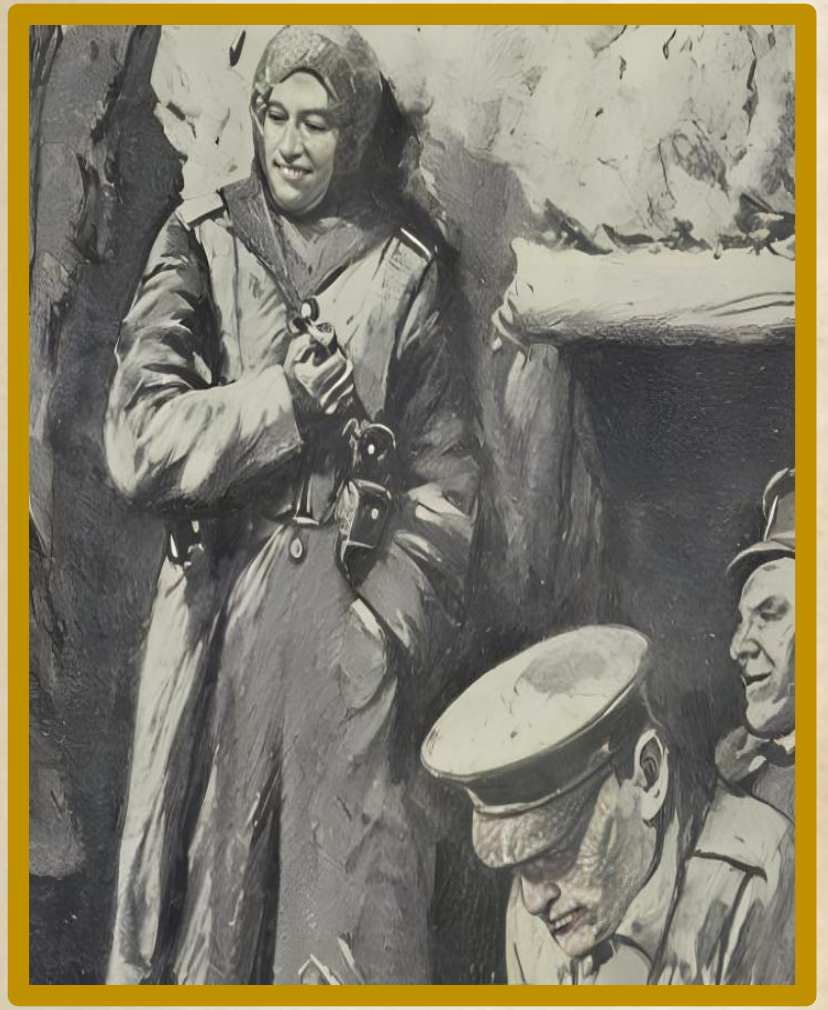
Moments later, another rider appeared, charging forward with remarkable speed, his figure shrouded in a cloud of dust that

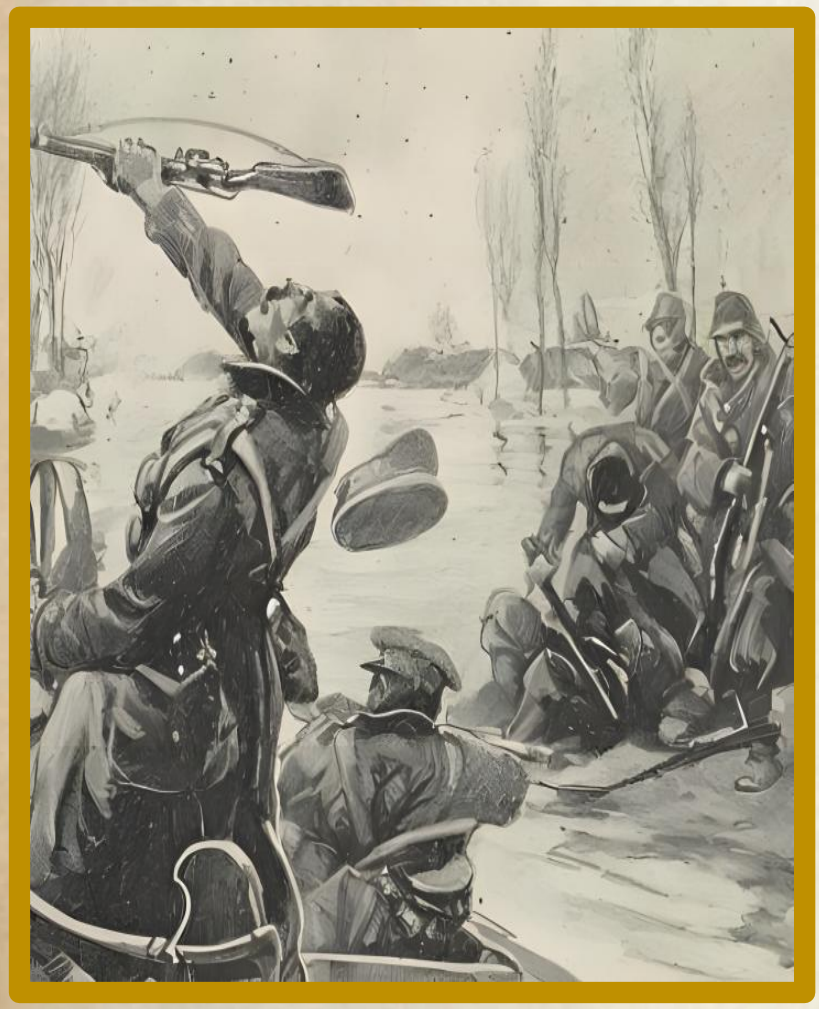
swirled around him. The horse he rode was lathered with sweat, its flanks heaving as it galloped, clearly pushed to its limits in a race against time.

The urgency of the situation was palpable, contrasting sharply with the general's calm demeanor, as the atmosphere thickened with anticipation of what this new arrival might bring.

Finally, a sense of urgency surged through us as we interpreted the command to advance toward the fractured lines of the encroaching German forces.

The atmosphere was thick with





anticipation, as the weight of the moment pressed down on our shoulders.

Each soldier felt the gravity of the situation, knowing that the path ahead was fraught with danger yet also filled with the potential for decisive action.

The broken lines of the enemy, a testament to their faltering resolve, beckoned us forward, igniting a flicker of hope amidst the chaos.

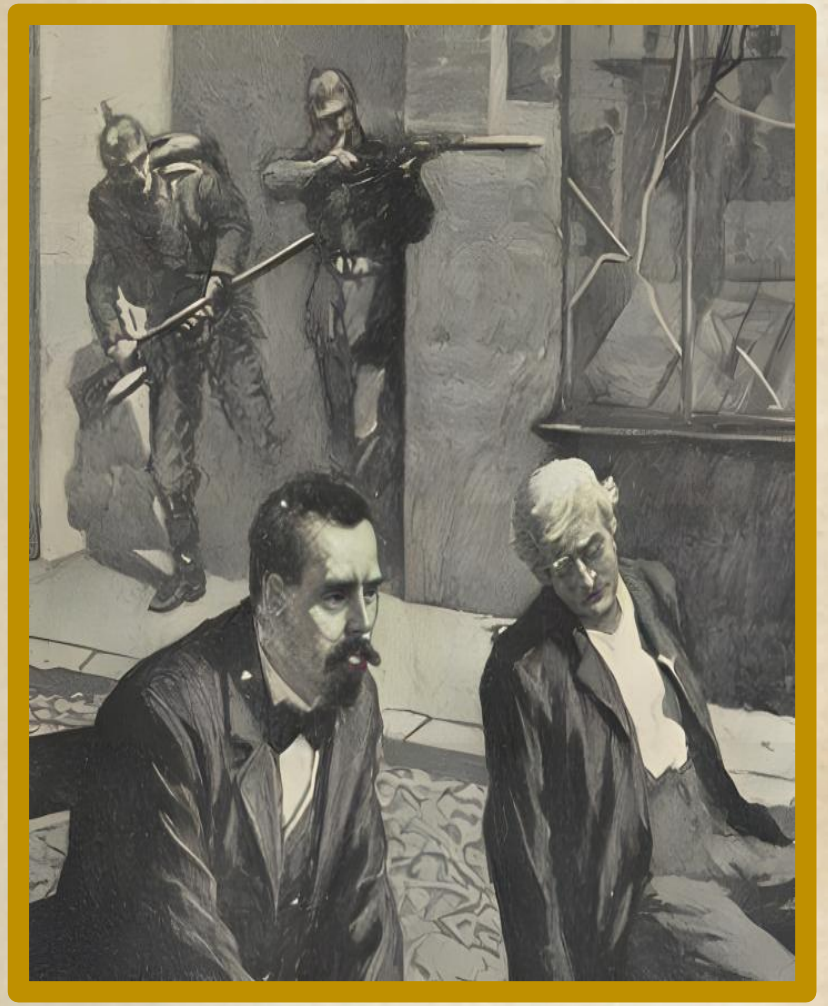
As we prepared to move, the collective determination of our unit crystallized into a singular focus: to push through the uncertainty and

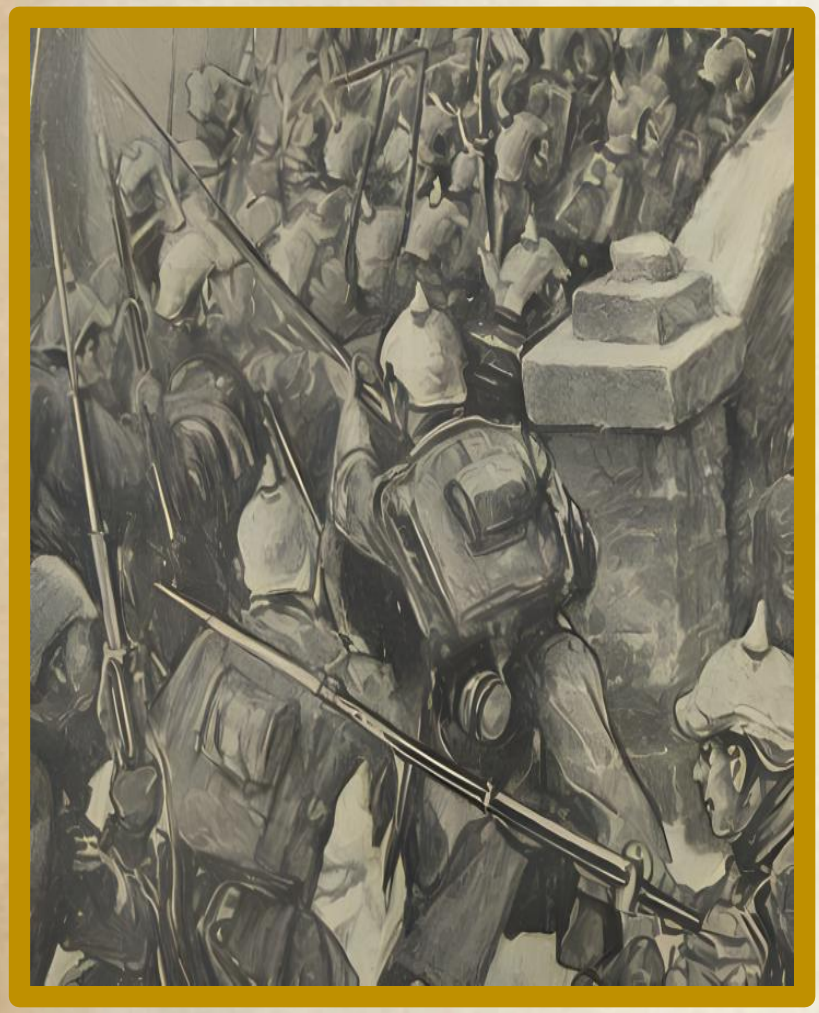
reclaim the ground that had been lost.

I observed the general as he composed himself, his posture reflecting a blend of authority and solemnity.

He raised his hand towards the medal adorned with golden leaves, a gesture reminiscent of a salute to a higher command, before issuing the order for a retreat back to the trenches.

This decision, made earlier that morning, stirred a palpable sense of discontent among the troops, who felt as though they had been deprived of a hard-fought victory.





Many of these soldiers had witnessed their comrades make the ultimate sacrifice, and the weight of that loss hung heavily in the air, amplifying the sense of injustice and frustration that permeated the ranks.

That evening, a chorus of discontent erupted as numerous voices expressed their outrage over the general's perceived cowardice, corruption, and senility.

Critics lamented how he had managed to transform a promising victory into a humiliating defeat, a loss that not only tarnished his

reputation but also dishonored the valiant soldiers who had bravely charged into the fields of poppies. This moment of potential glory, which could have celebrated the courage and sacrifice of those who fought valiantly, was instead overshadowed by the general's failure to seize the moment, leaving a bitter taste of disappointment among those who had hoped for a different outcome. The air was thick with frustration as the community grappled with the implications of this lost opportunity, reflecting on the

broader consequences of leadership that falters in the face of adversity.

The discourse surrounding the ongoing struggle was rife with skepticism, particularly regarding the effectiveness of continuing to fight bravely in the face of overwhelming adversity.

A prevailing sentiment emerged among the ranks, suggesting that our leaders were either cowardly or incompetent, with a notable faction asserting that our venerable general—who had once gallantly served alongside

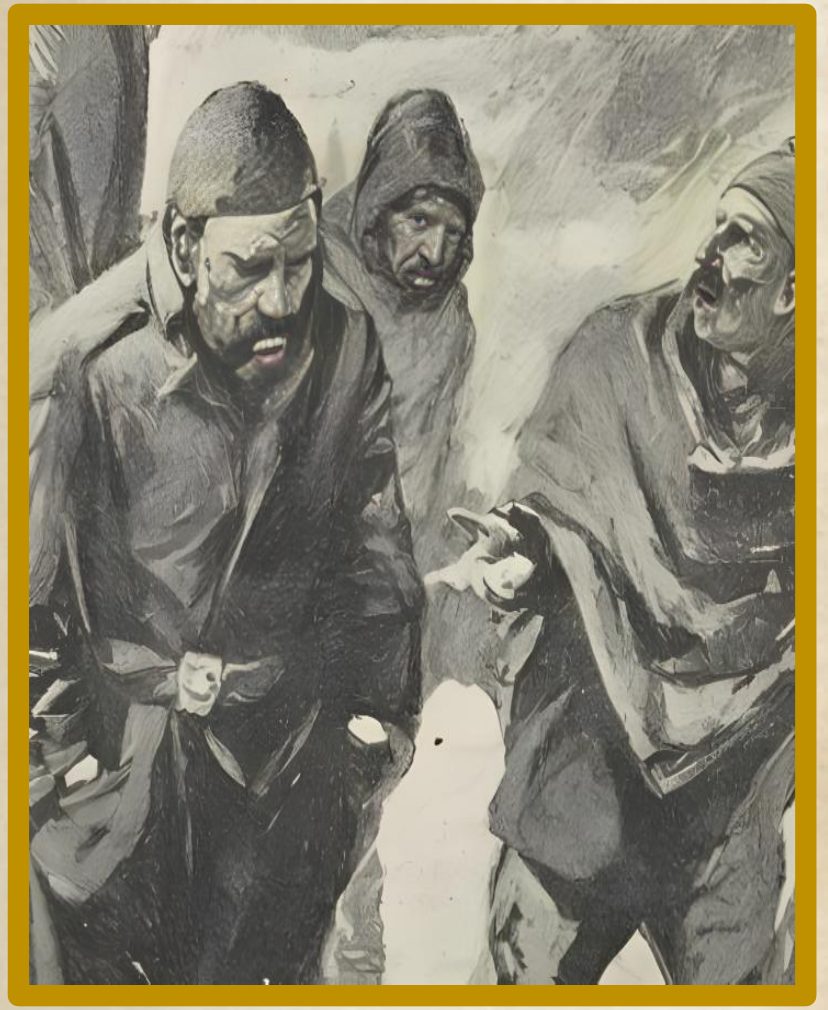
Napoleon in his youth—was guilty of both accusations.
This faction called for a decisive change in leadership, demanding that he either step down from his command or take personal responsibility by leading the next charge at the forefront of the advancing troops.
Such a call to action underscored the growing frustration and disillusionment within the ranks, as soldiers grappled with the implications of their leaders' perceived failures in the heat of battle.
The following morning, news

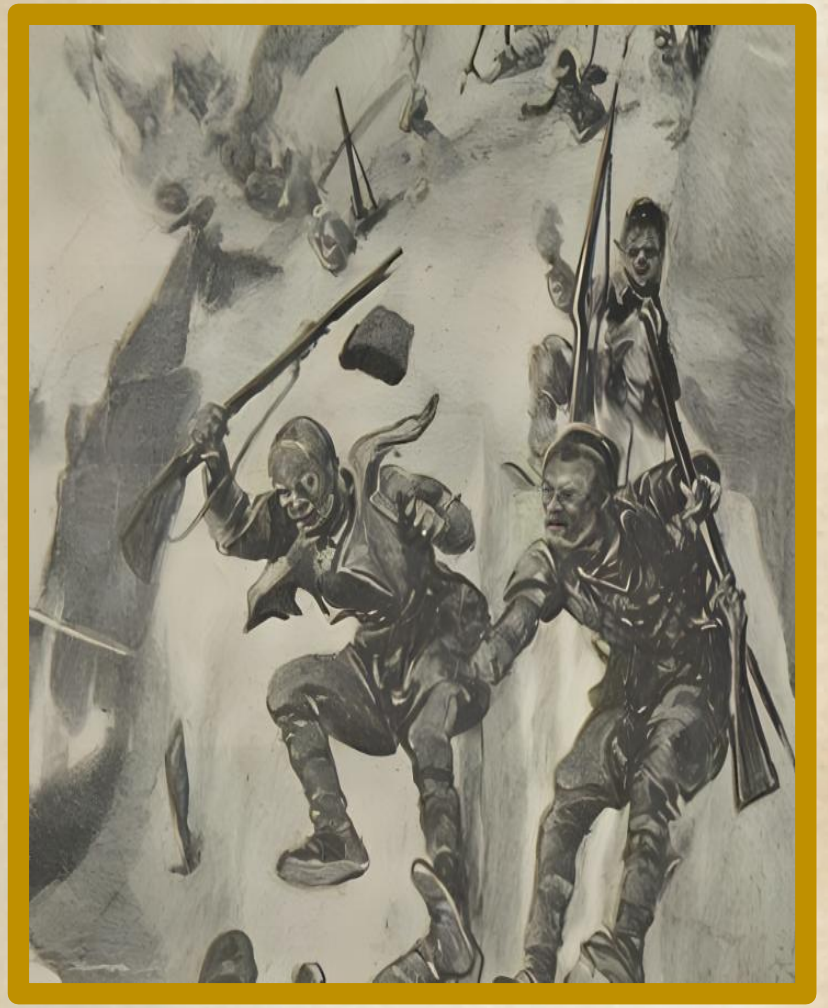
rapidly circulated throughout the camp, announcing that the war was set to conclude officially at 11 AM, prompting preparations for our return home.

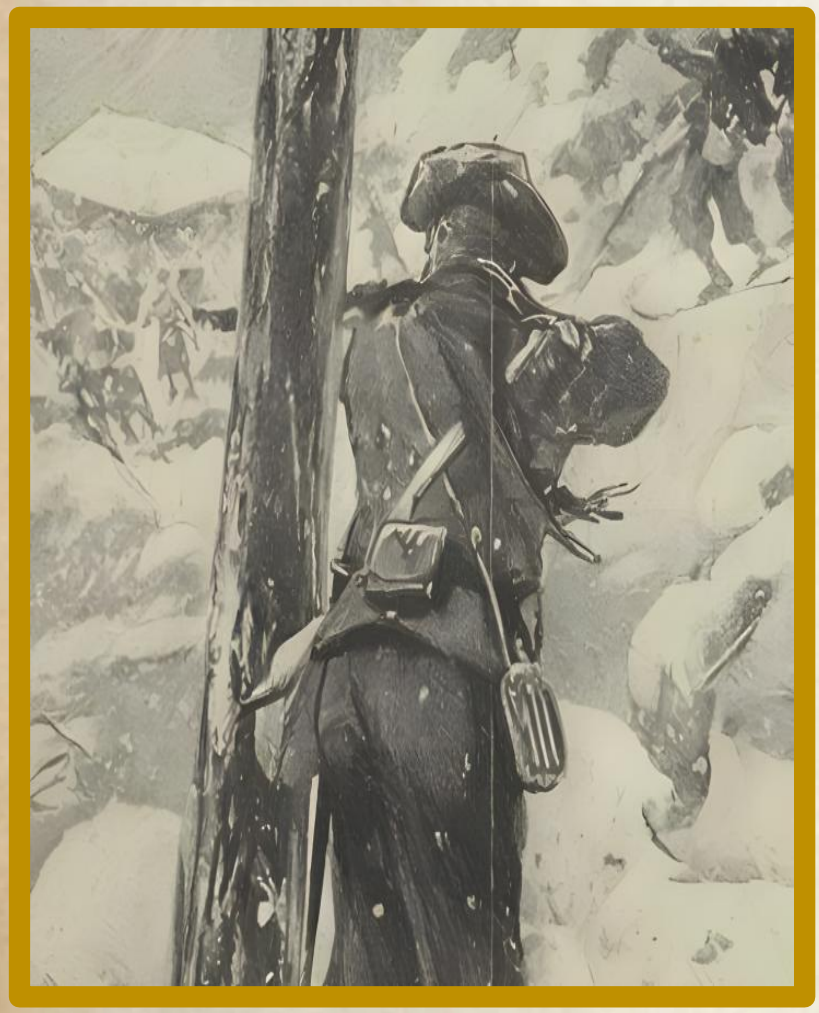
This revelation significantly altered perceptions of the general, whose previous decisions were now reassessed with newfound appreciation.

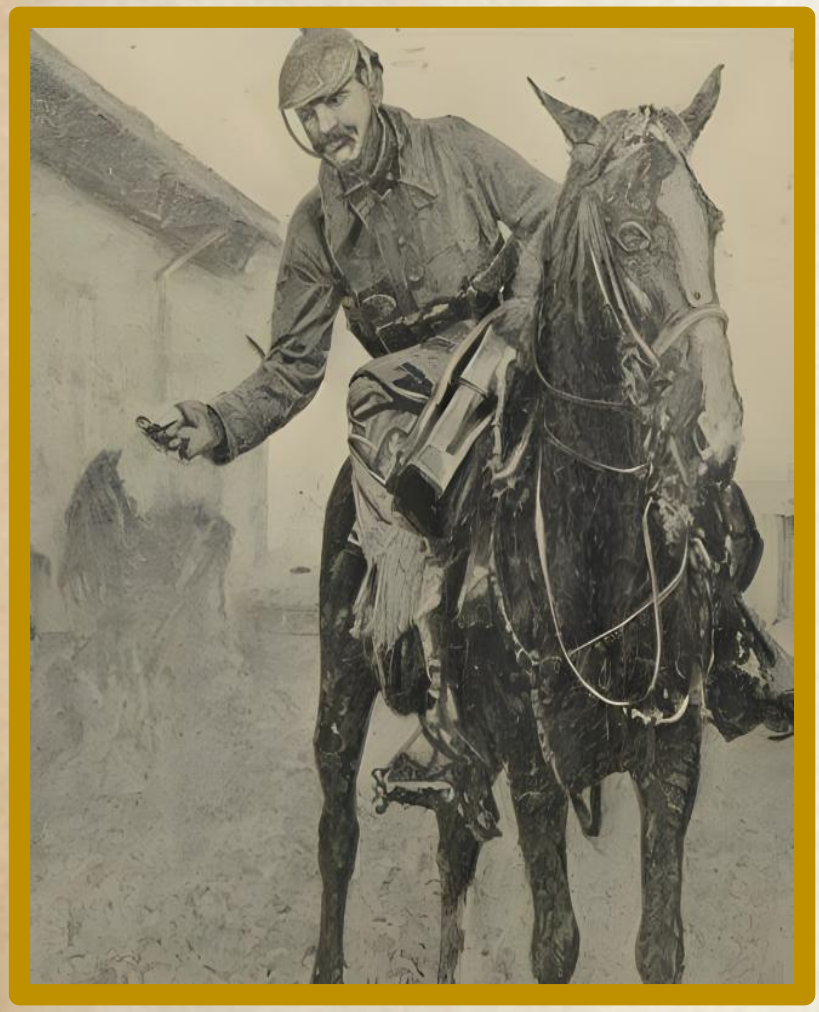
Many soldiers, who had once been critical of his strategies, took a moment to acknowledge his insight and foresight, recognizing that his leadership had played a crucial role in guiding them through the

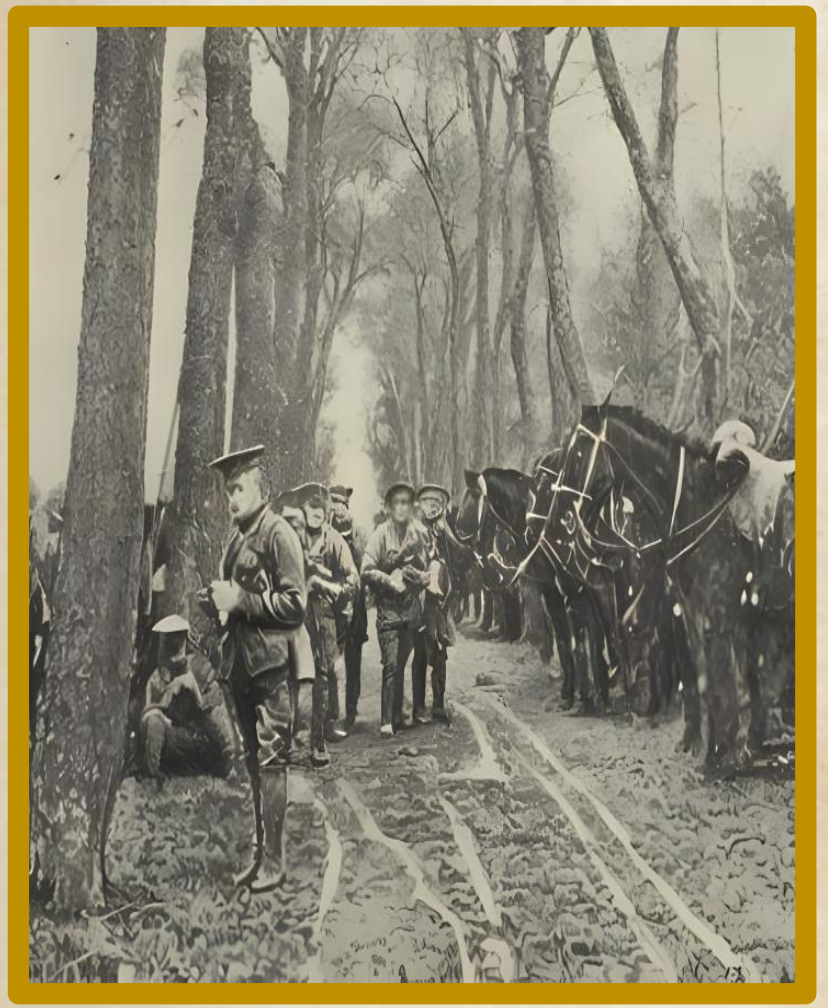
tumultuous times of conflict. The atmosphere shifted from one of uncertainty and skepticism to a sense of gratitude and respect, as the prospect of peace and the end of hostilities loomed on the horizon.

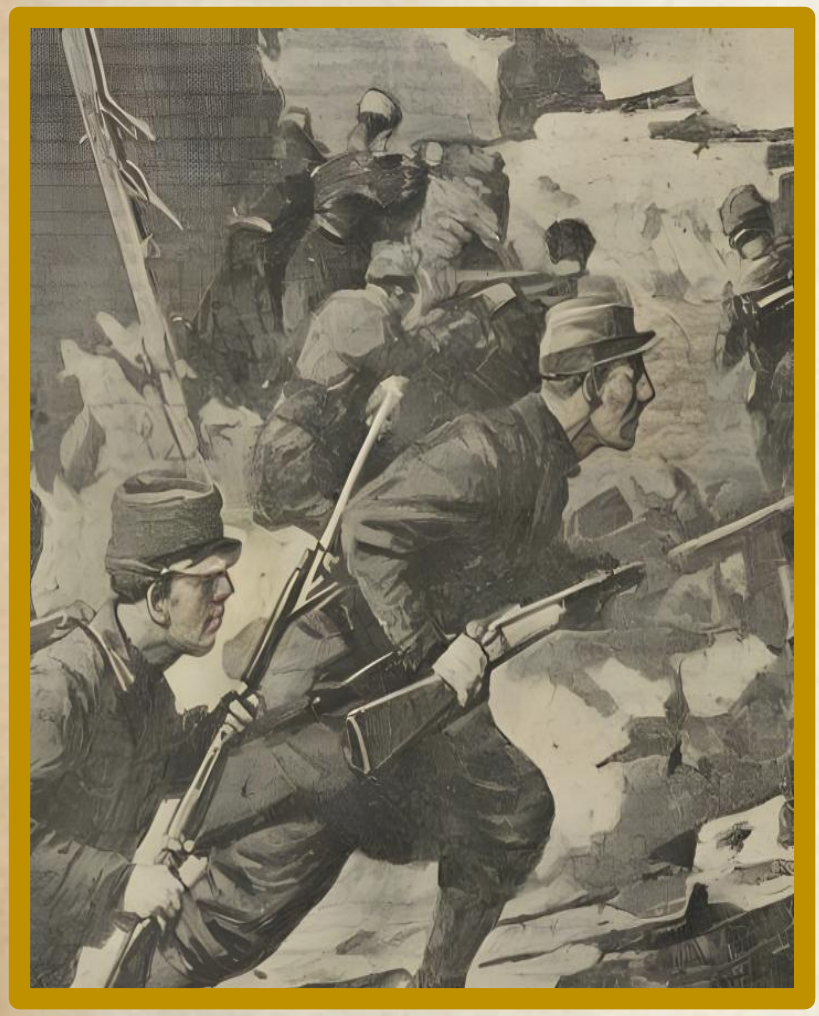


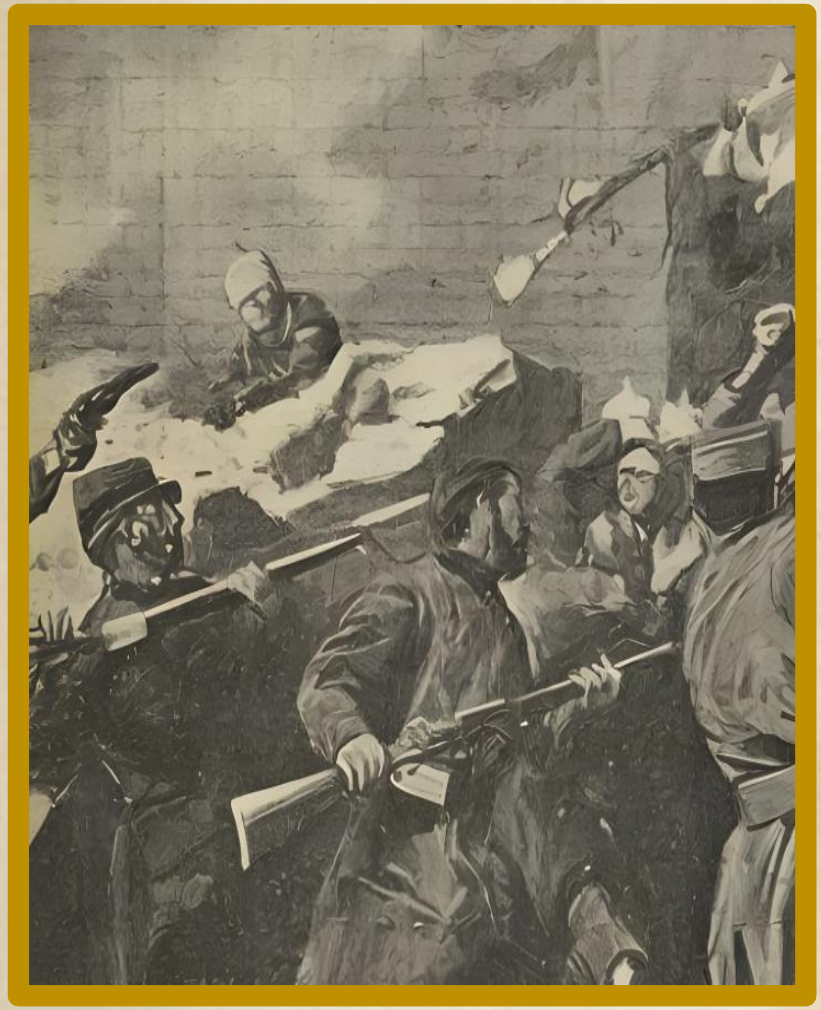


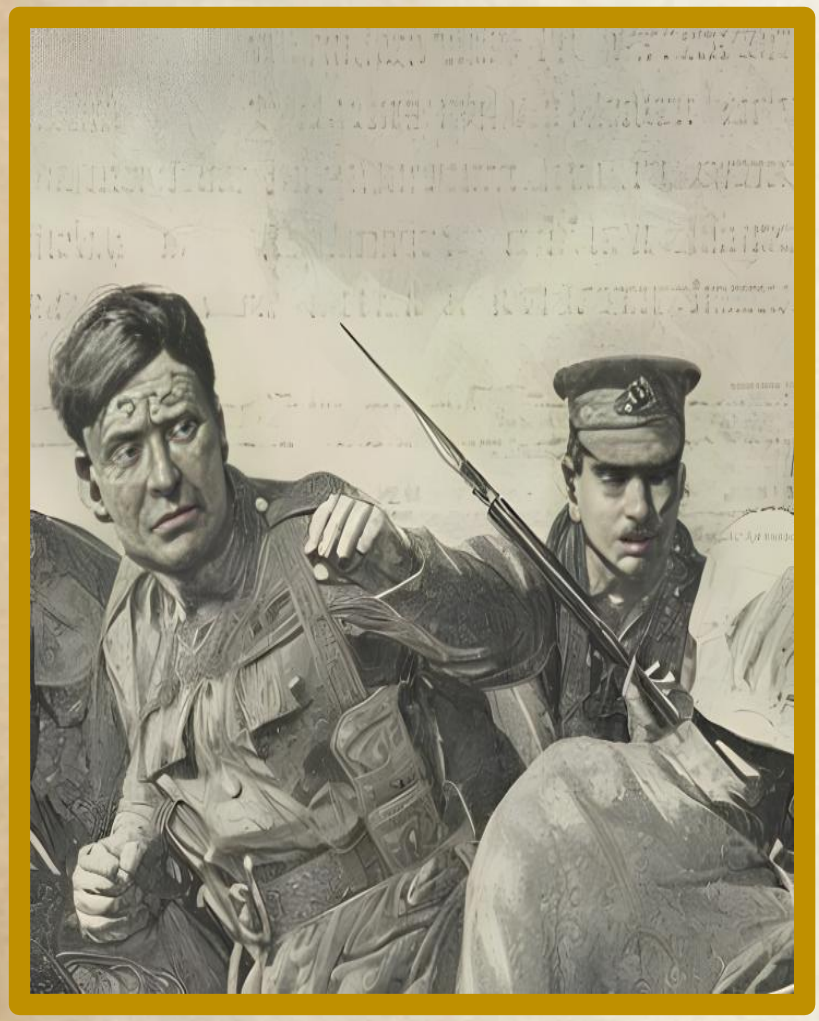


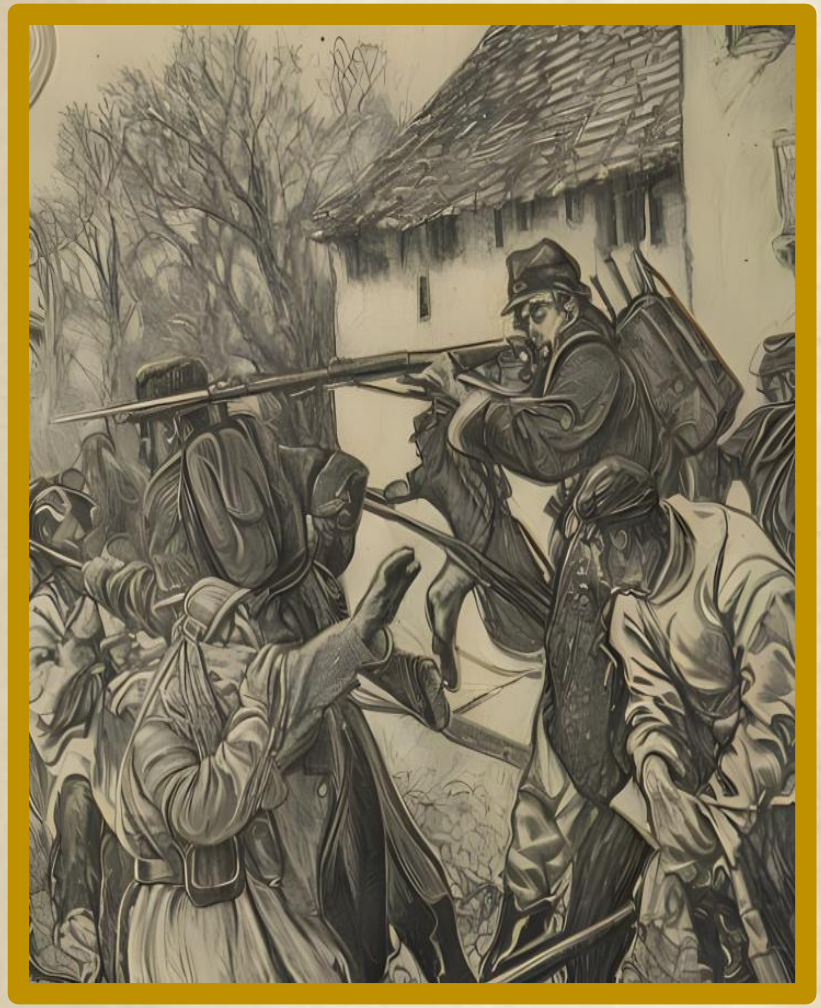


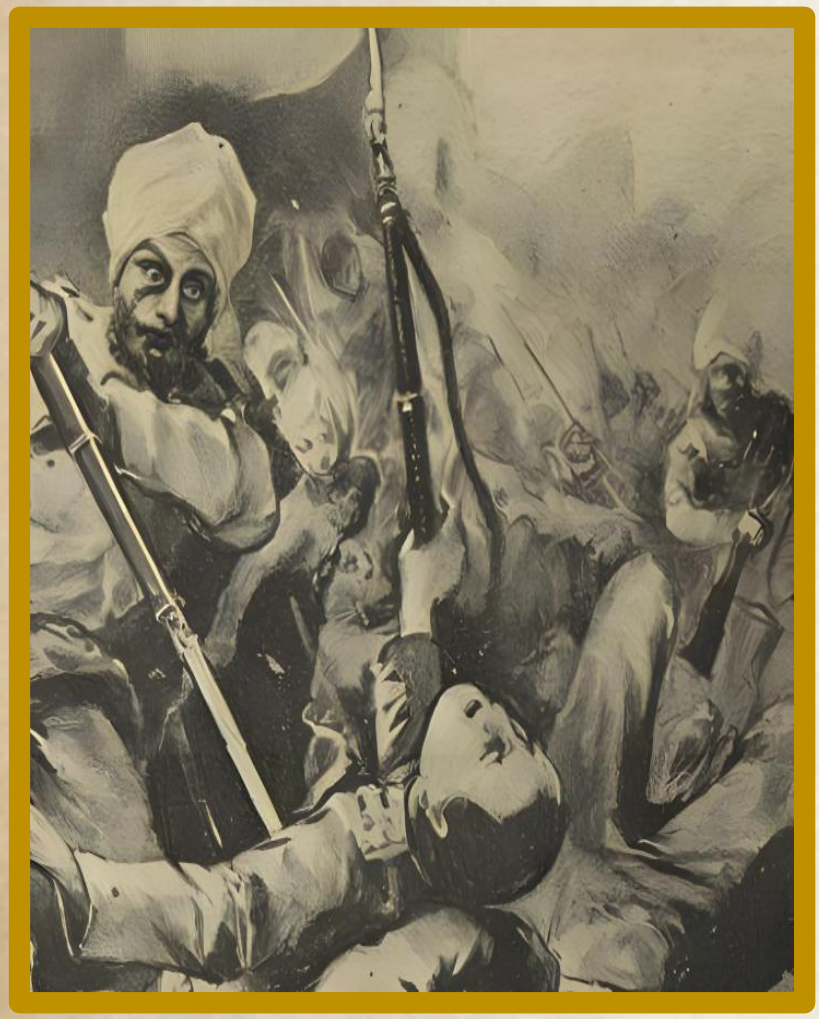


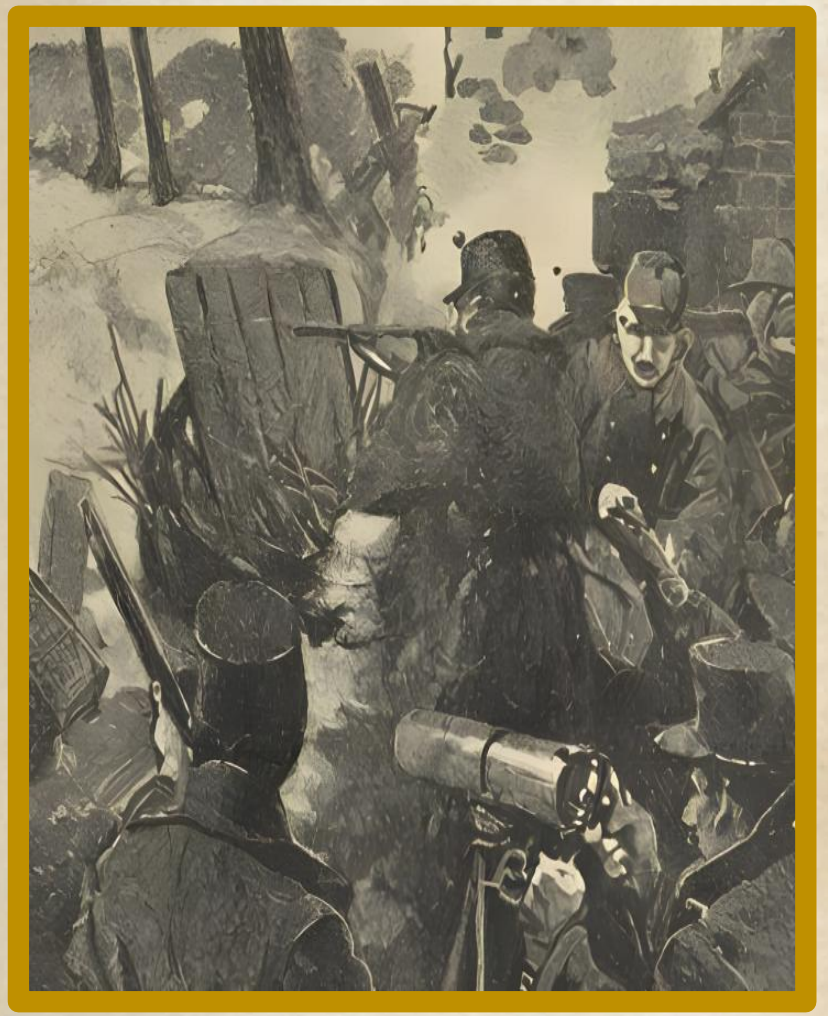


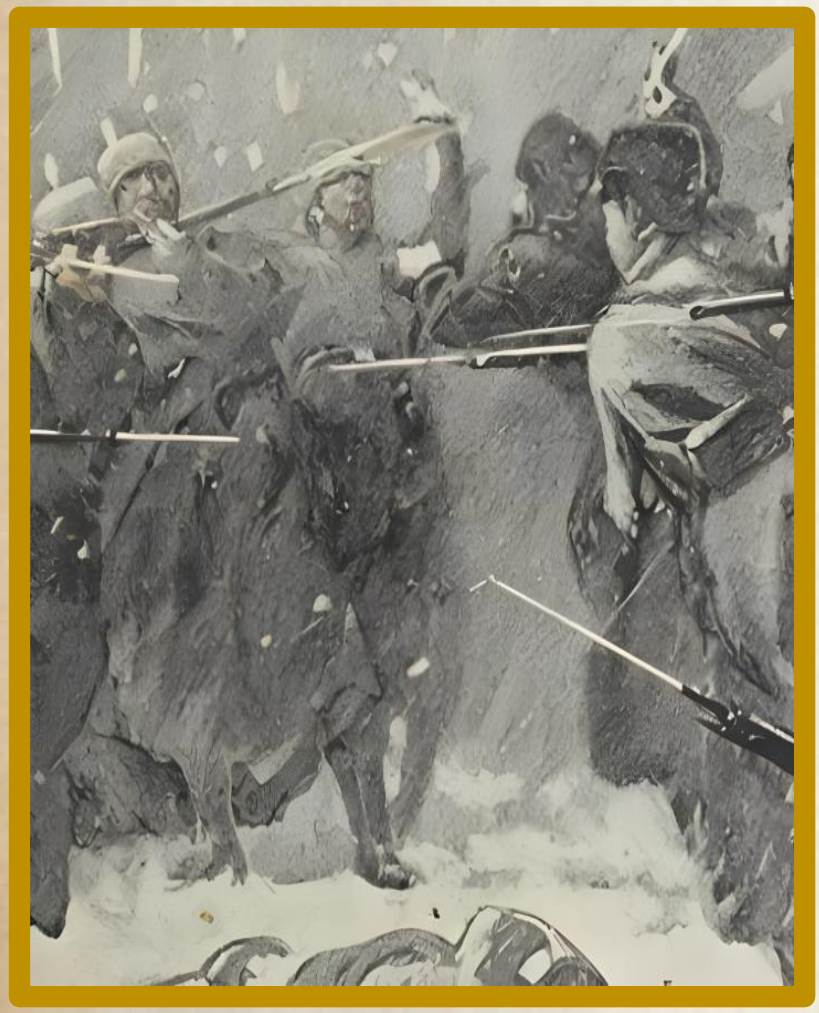


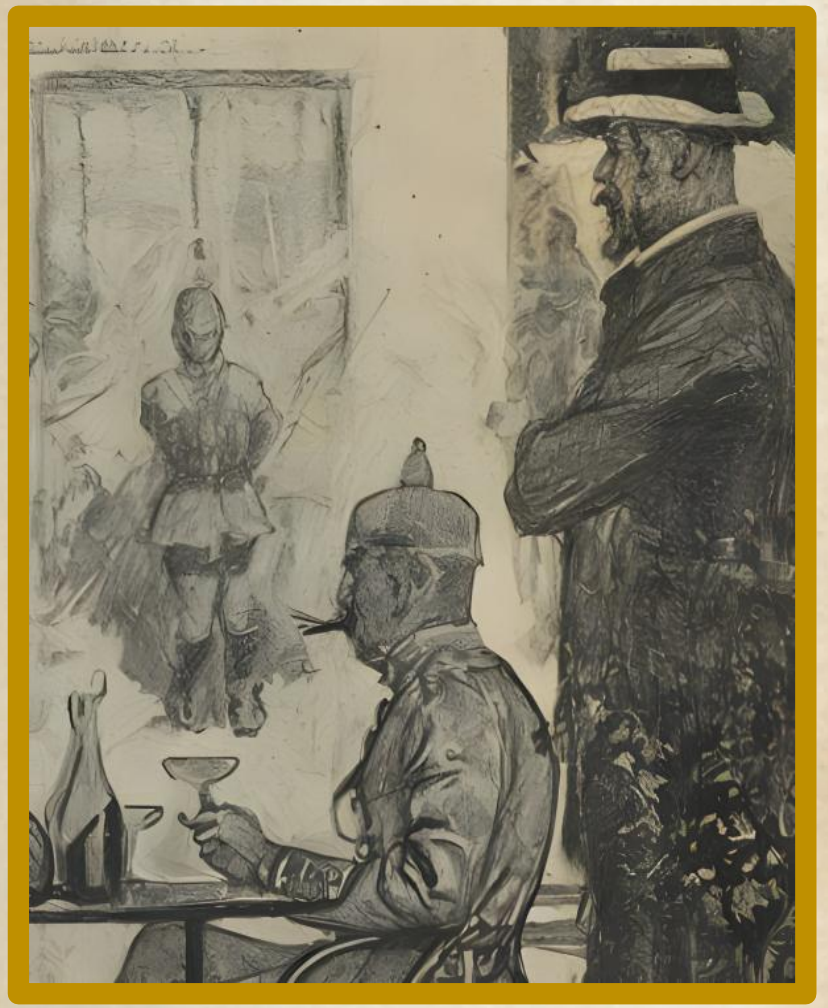


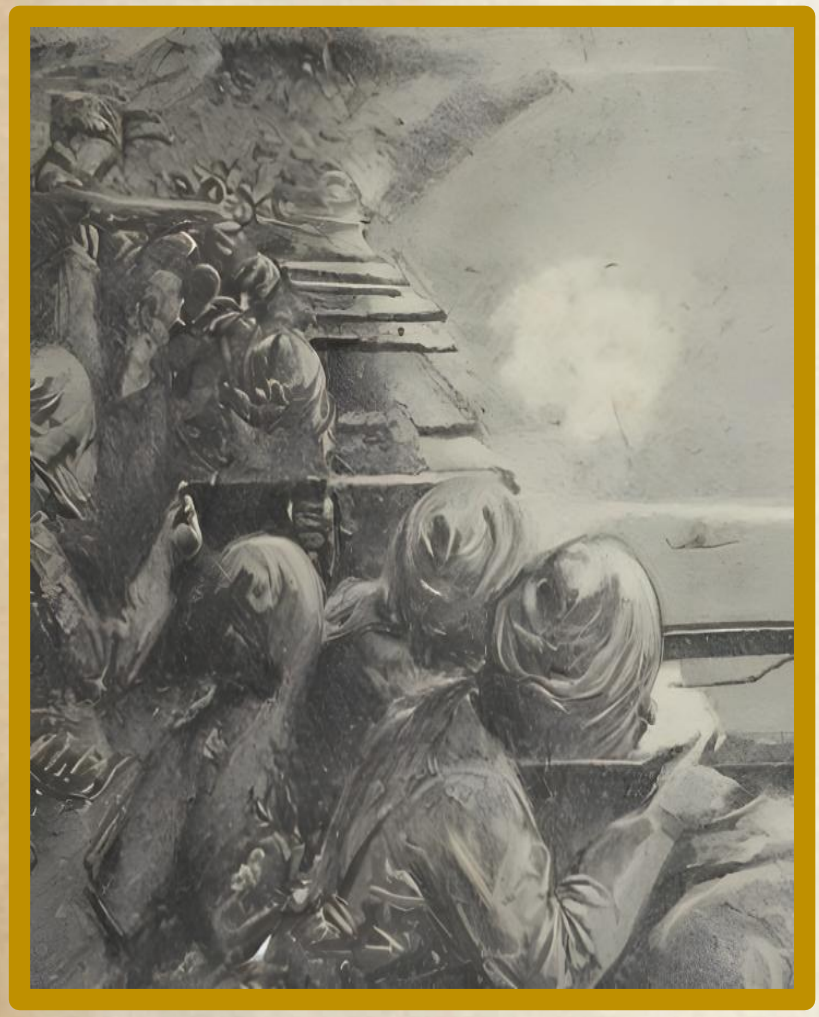


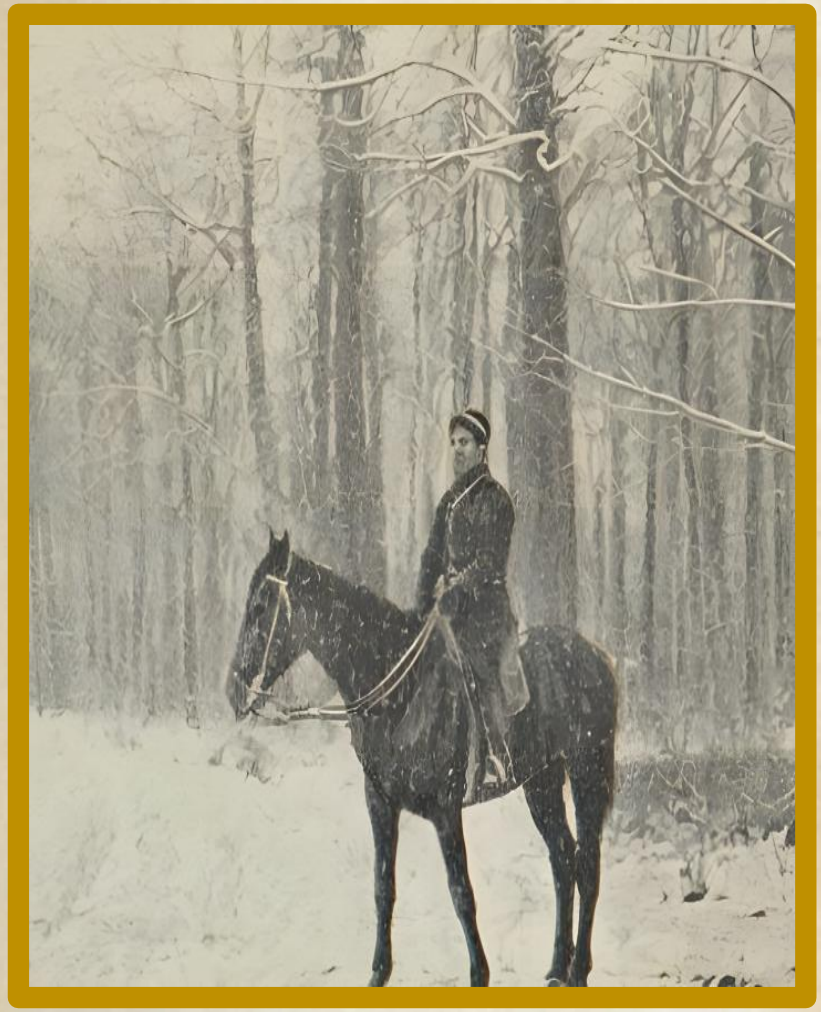


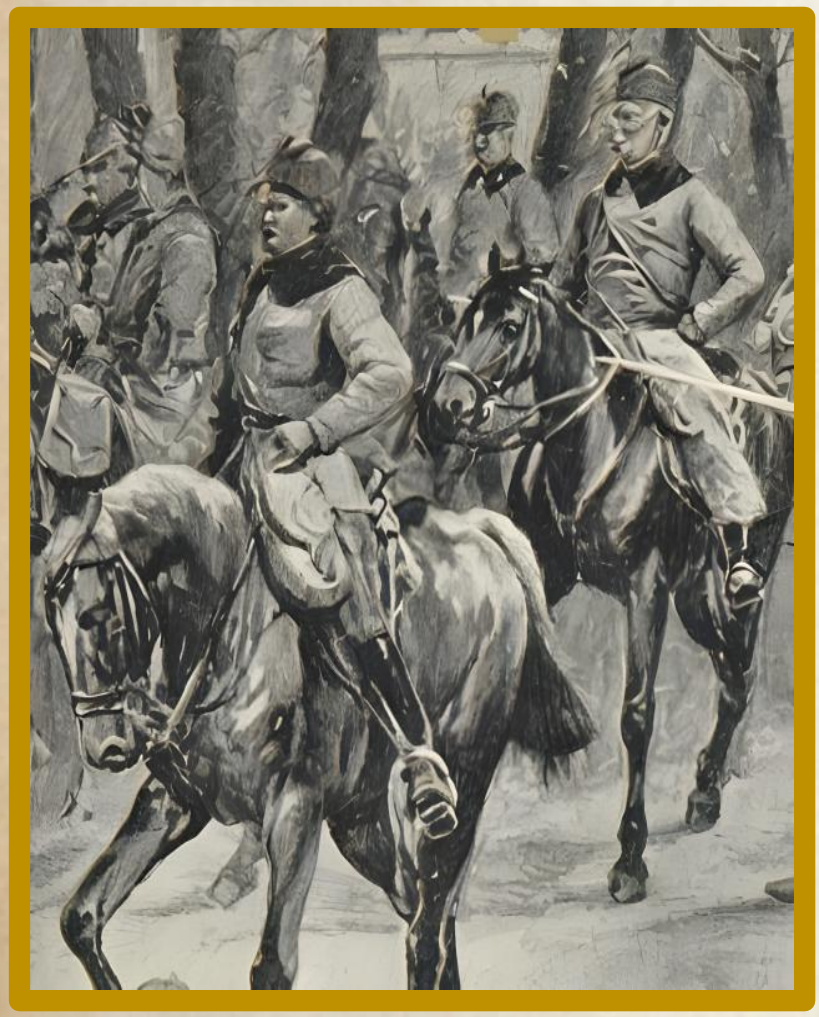


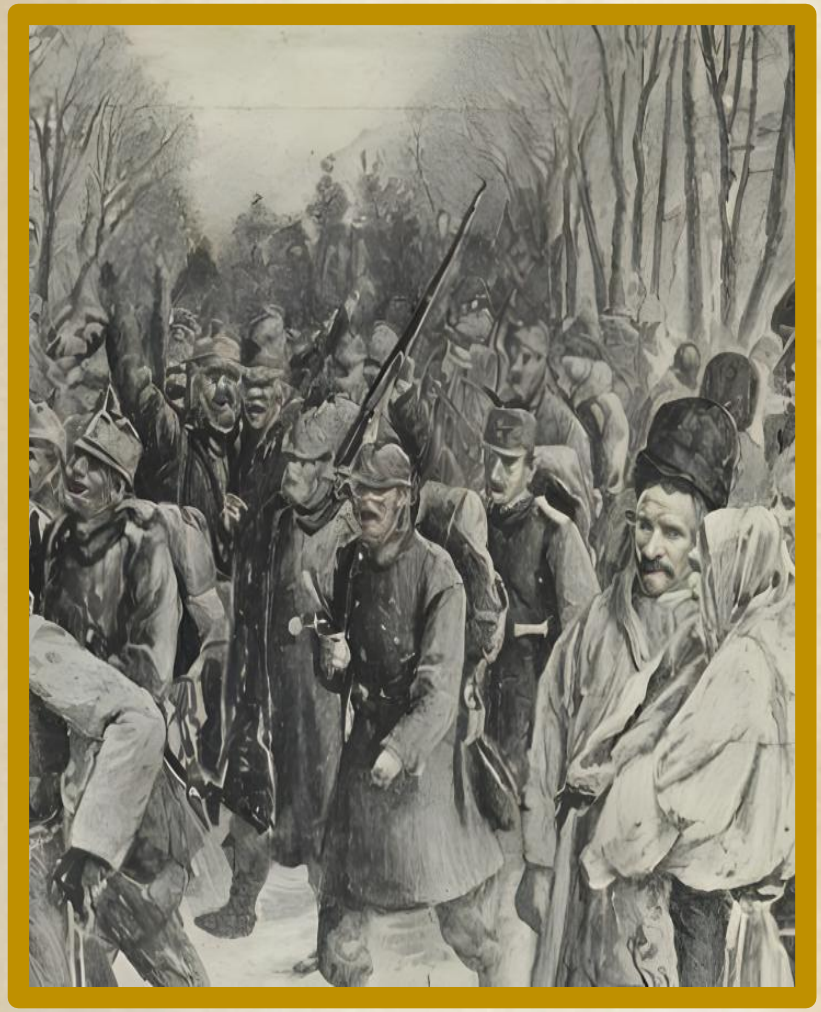


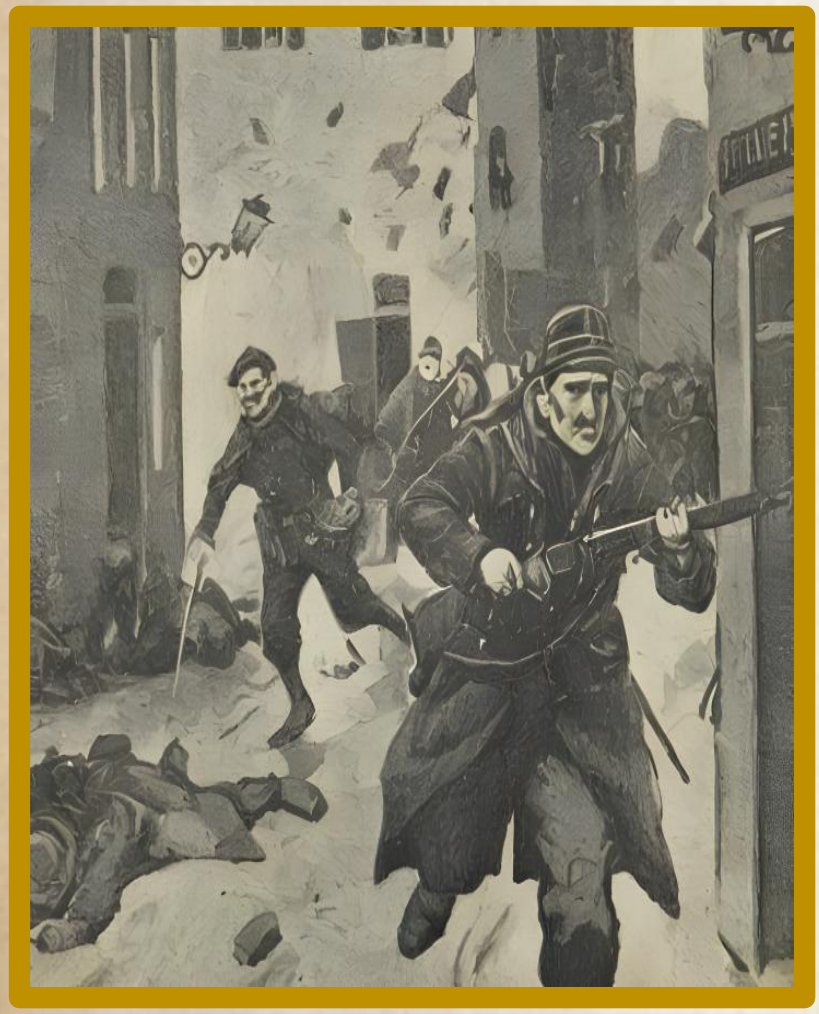


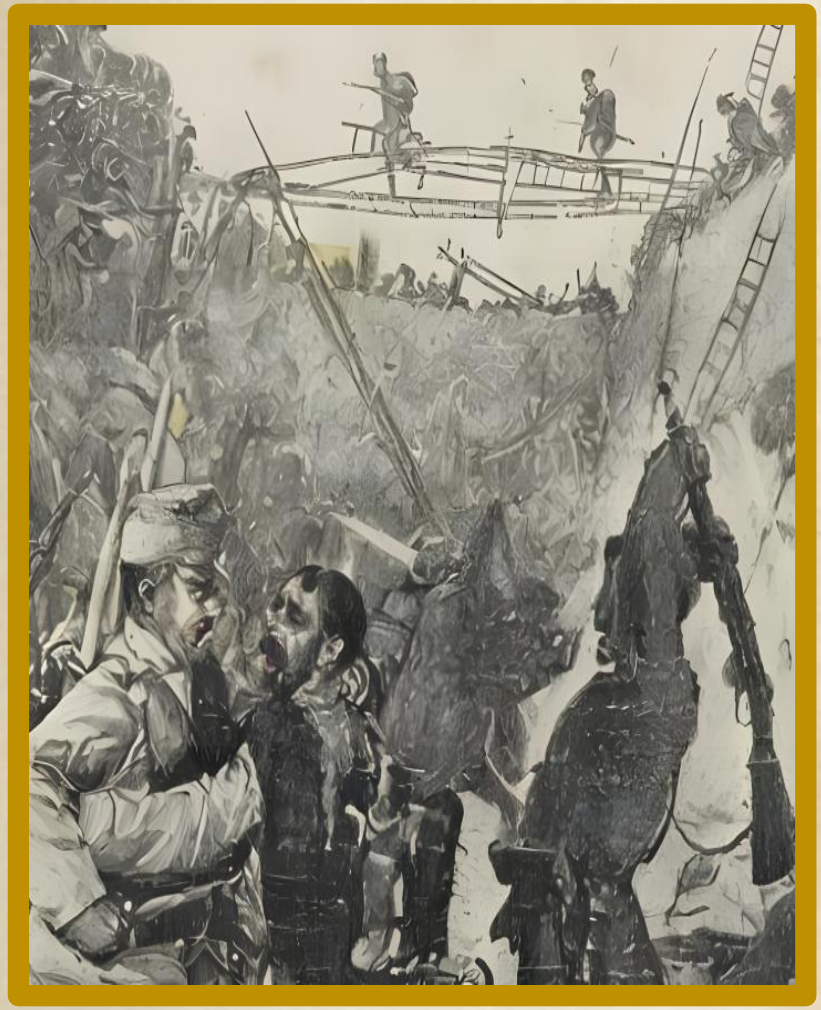


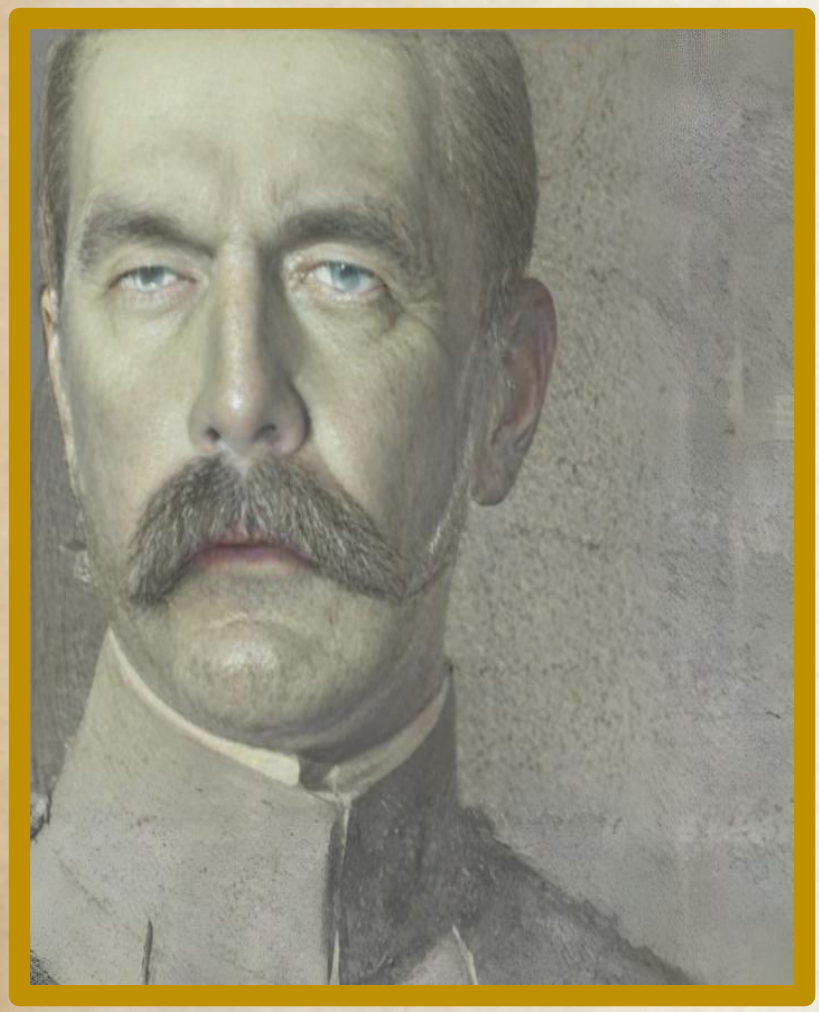


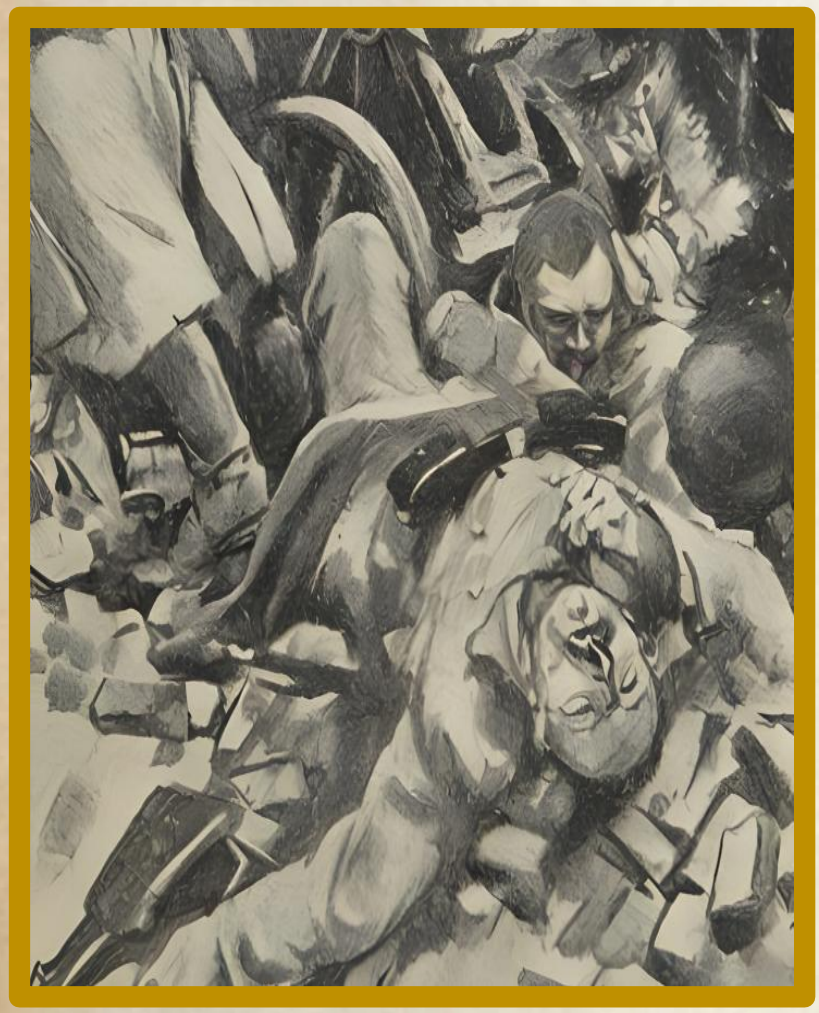


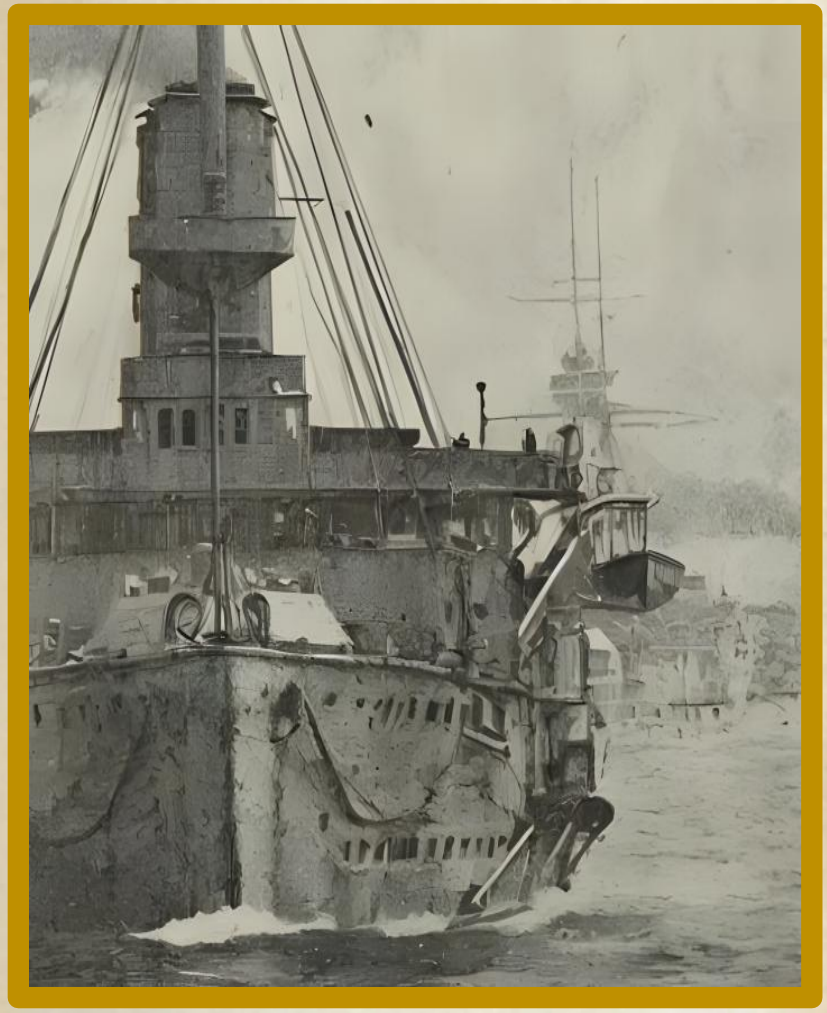


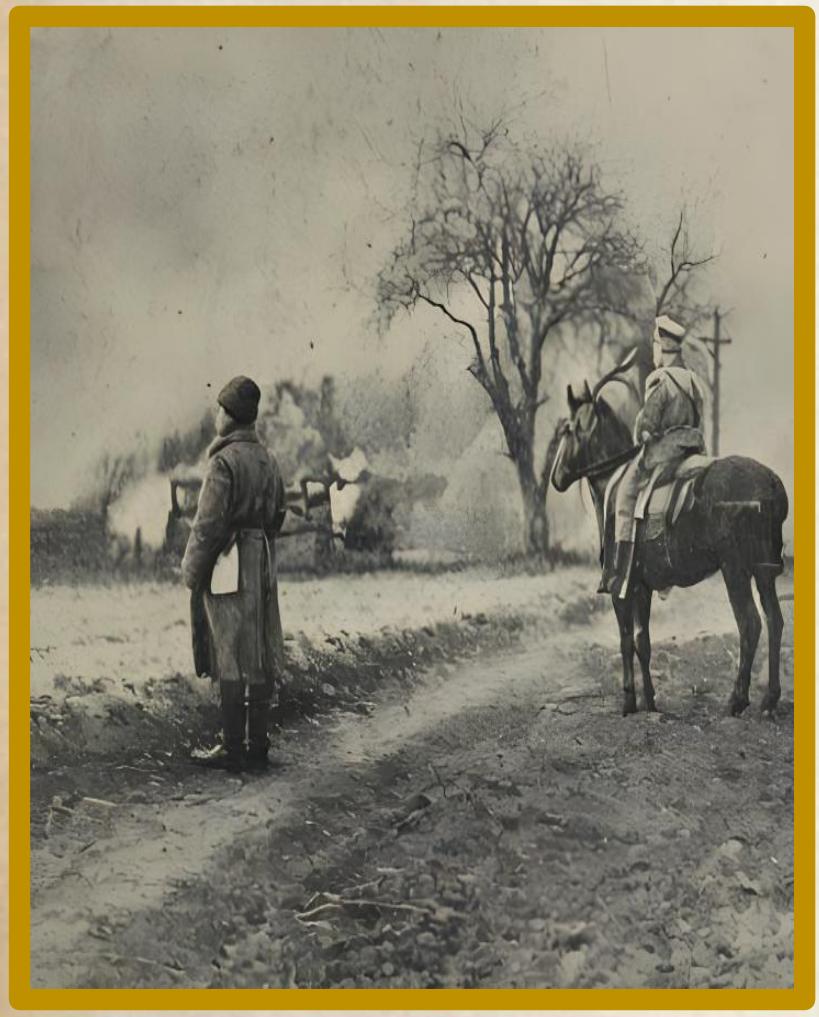


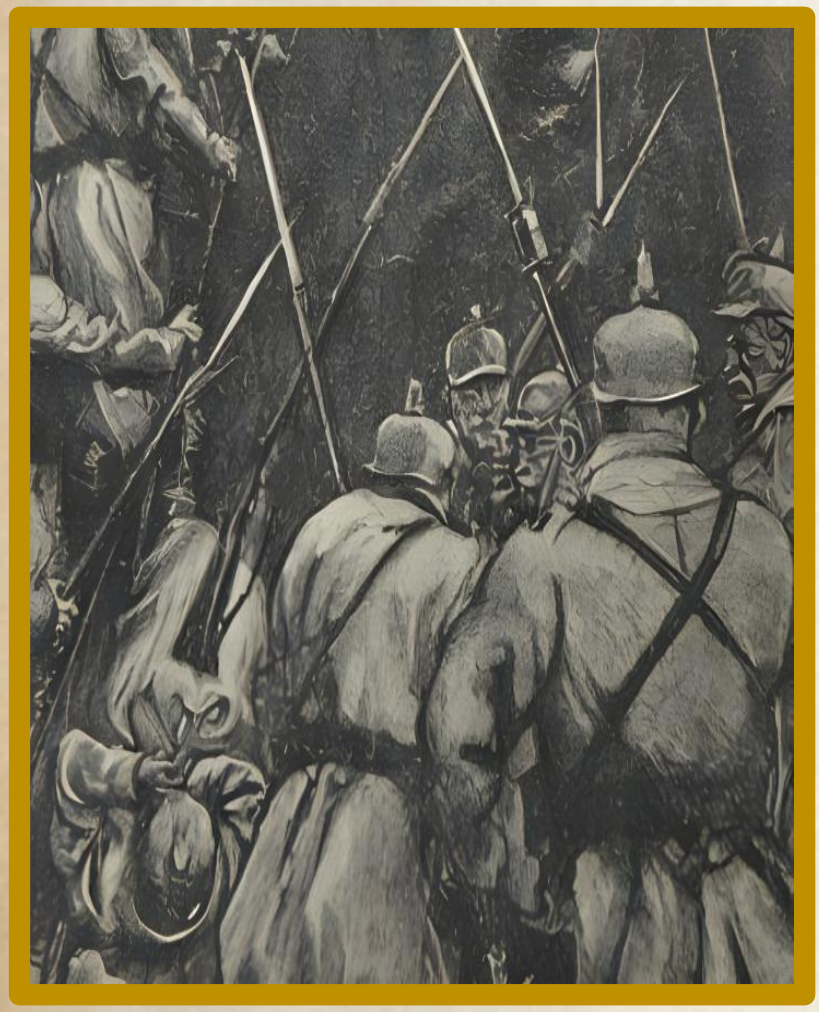


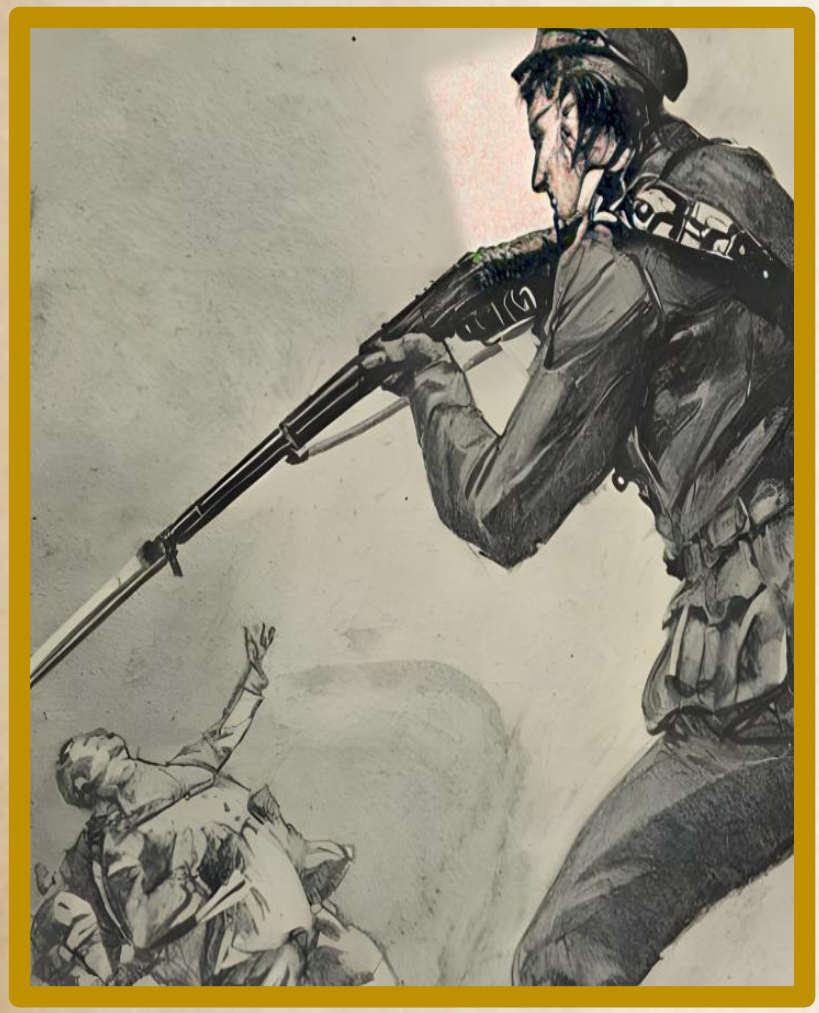


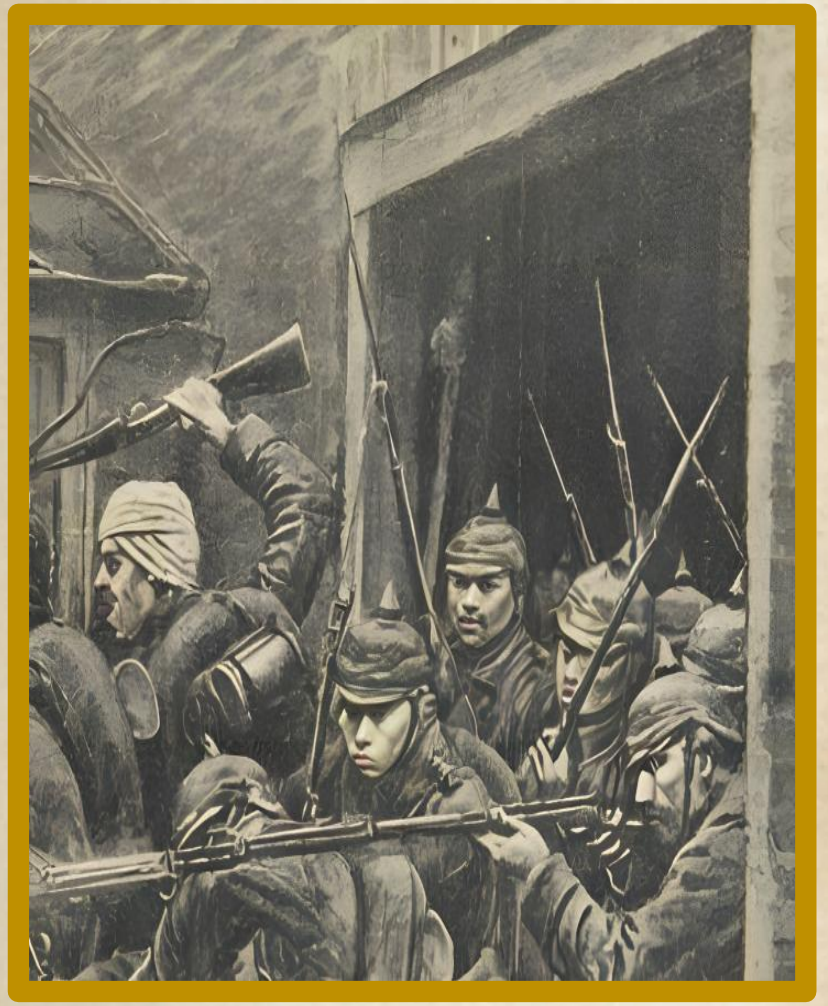


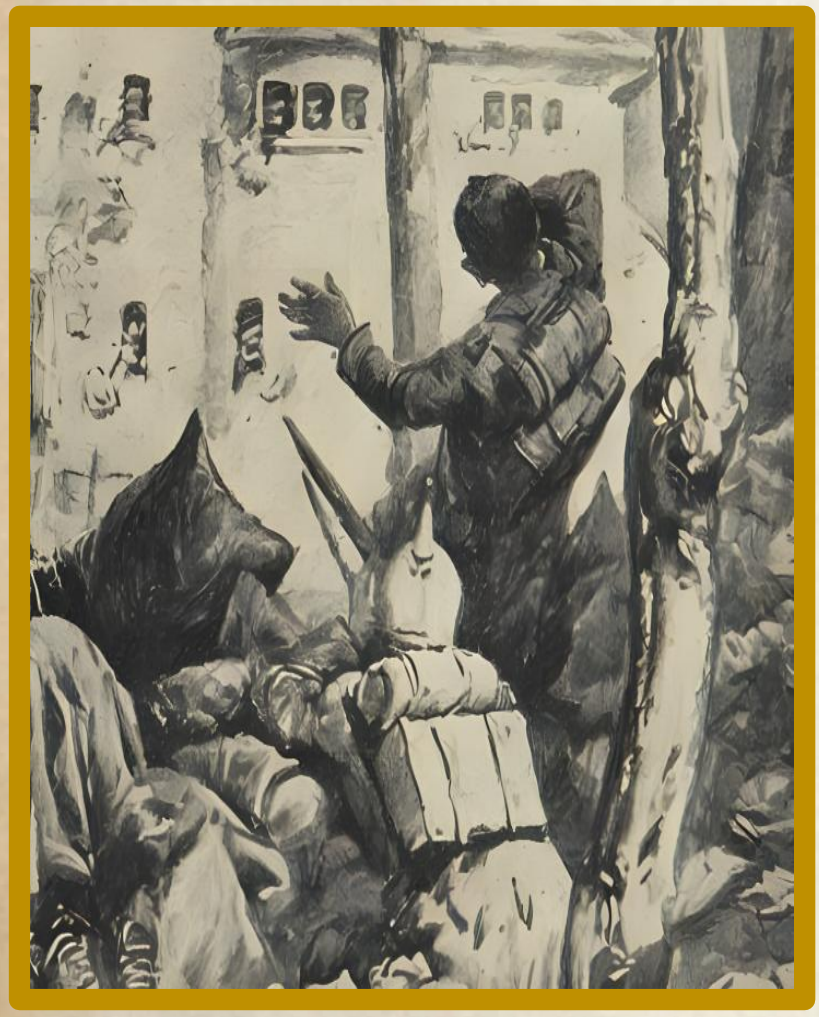


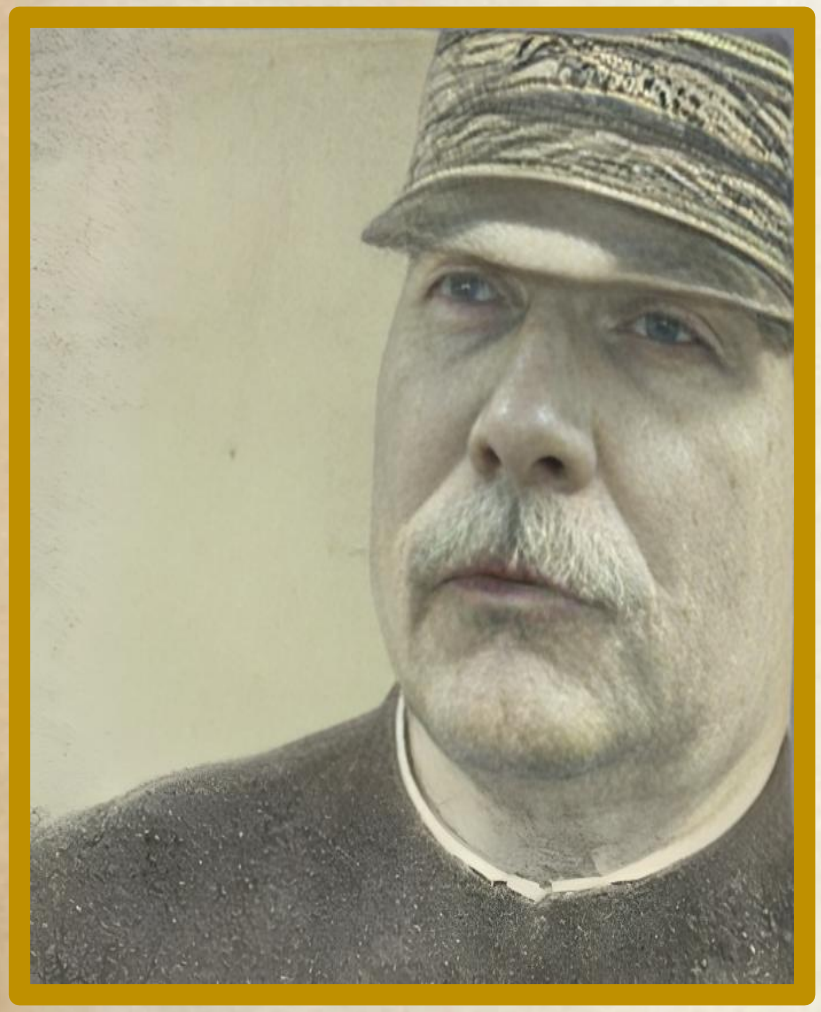


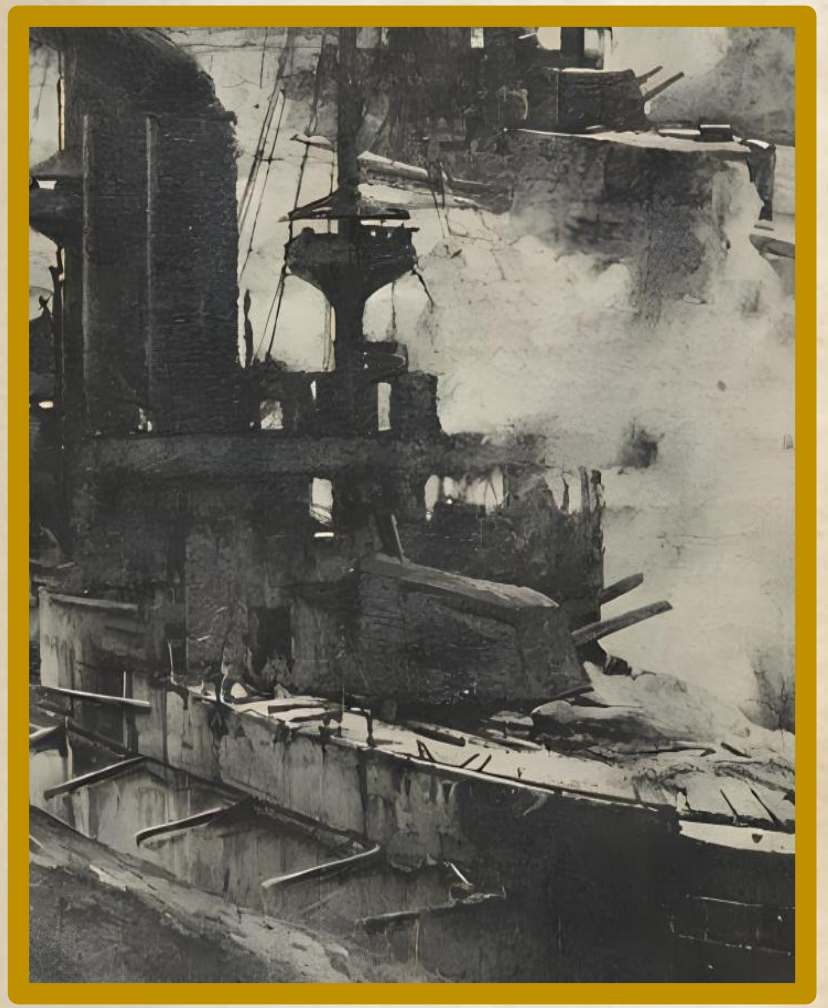


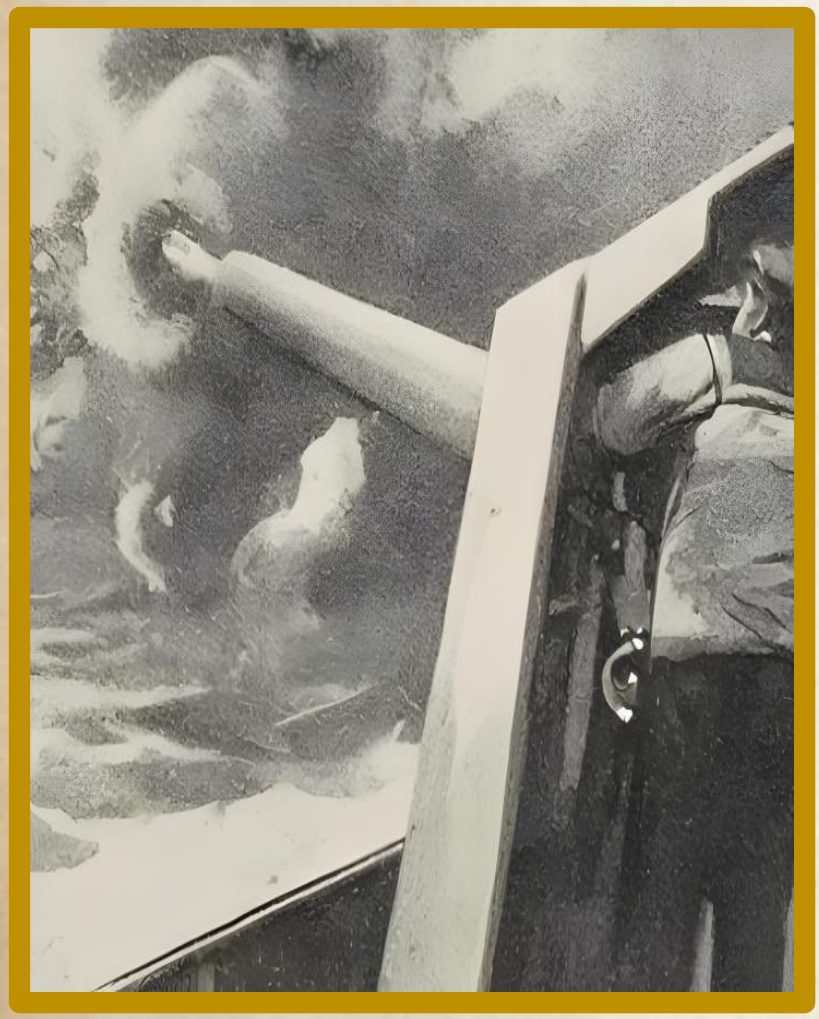


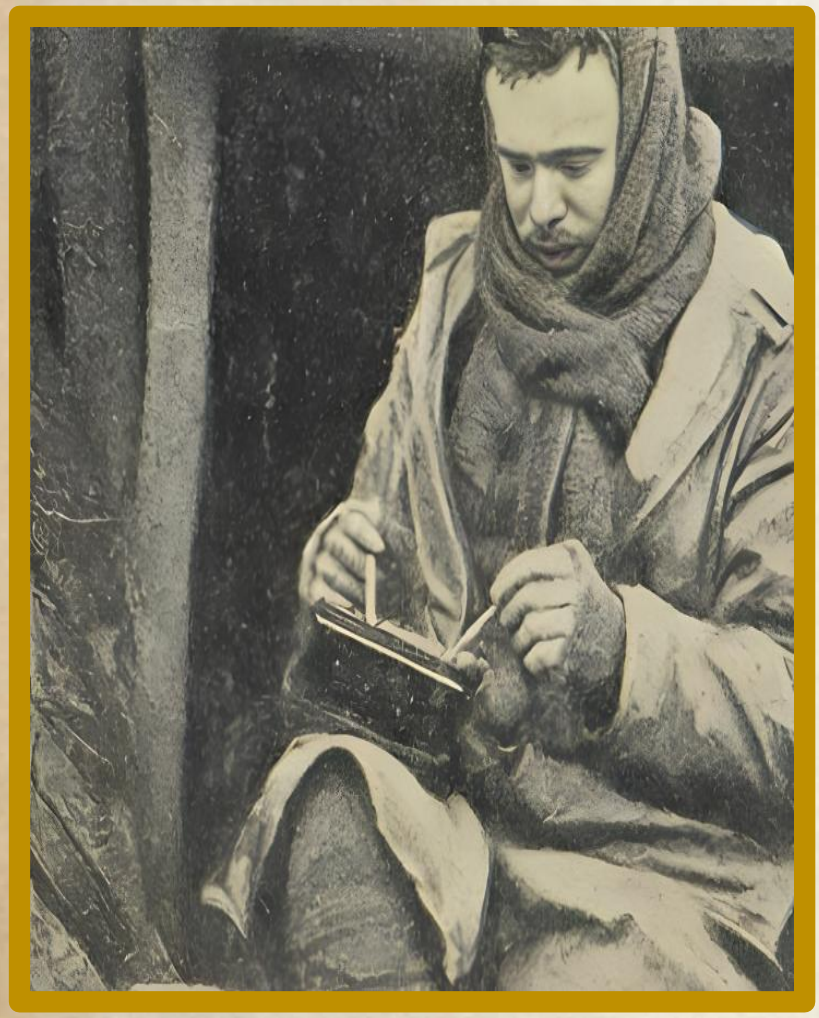


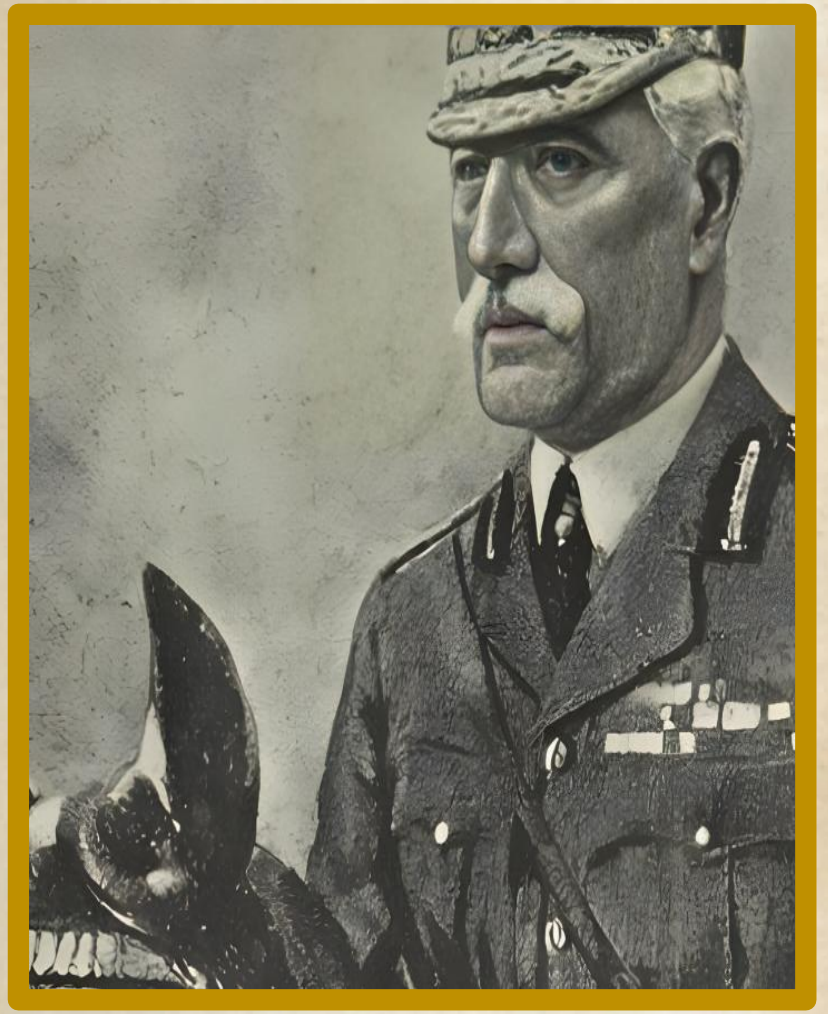


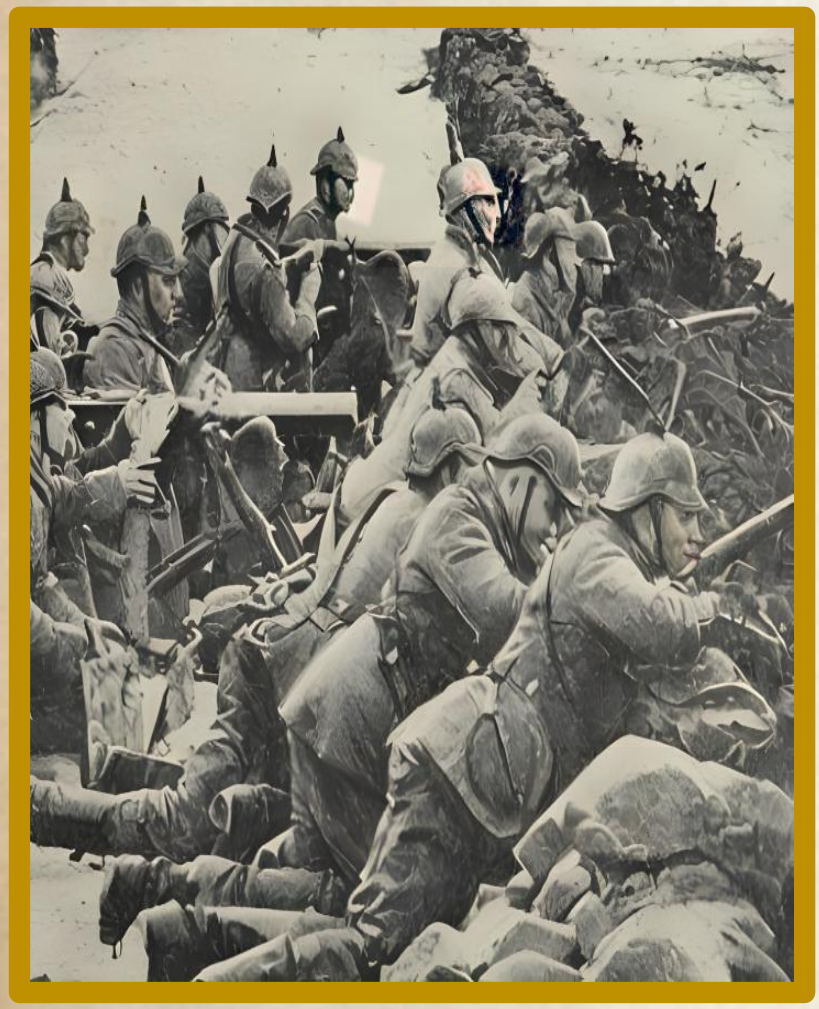


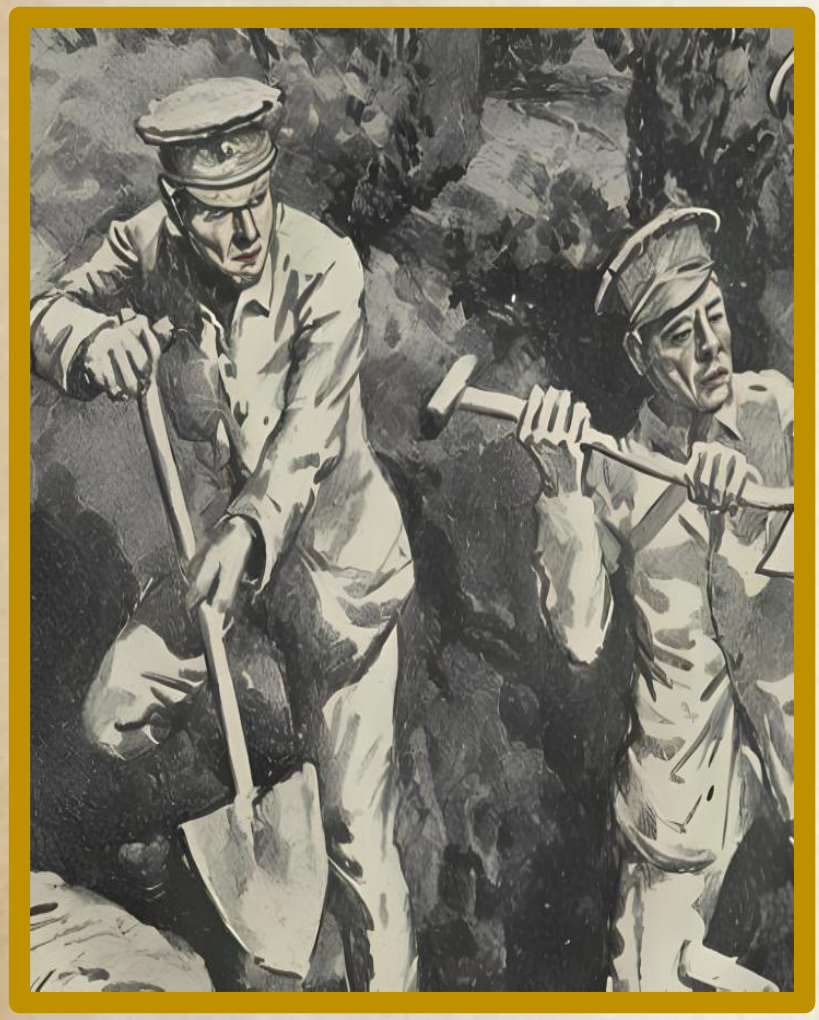


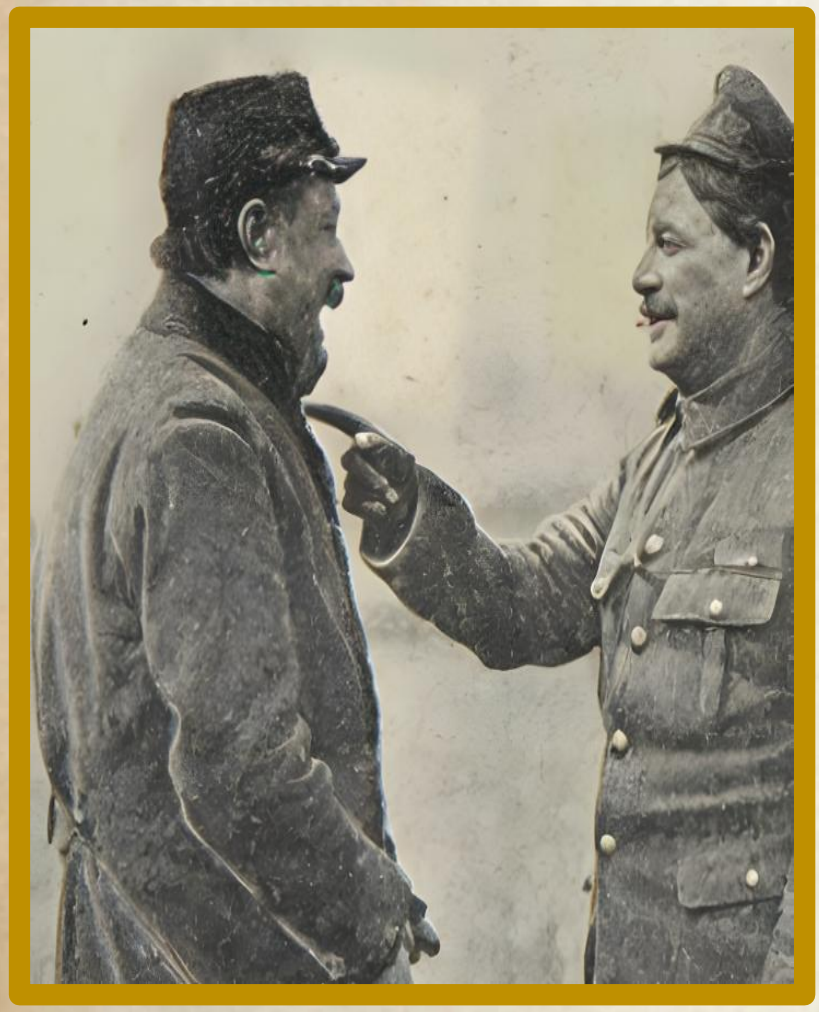


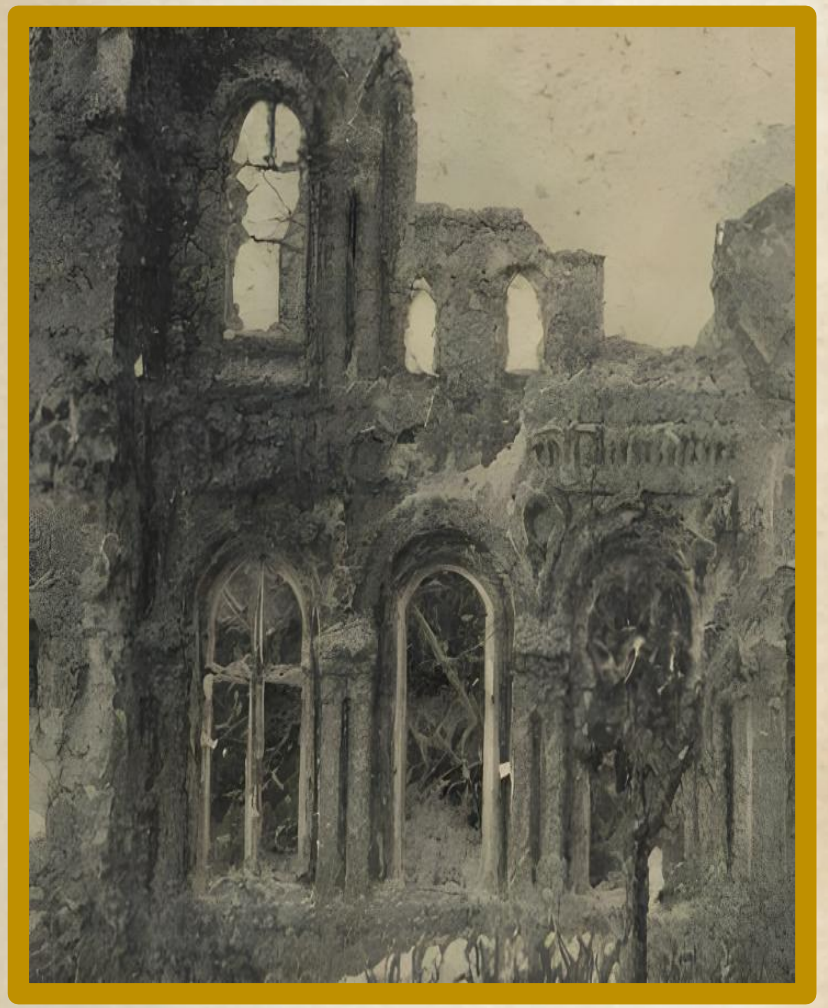


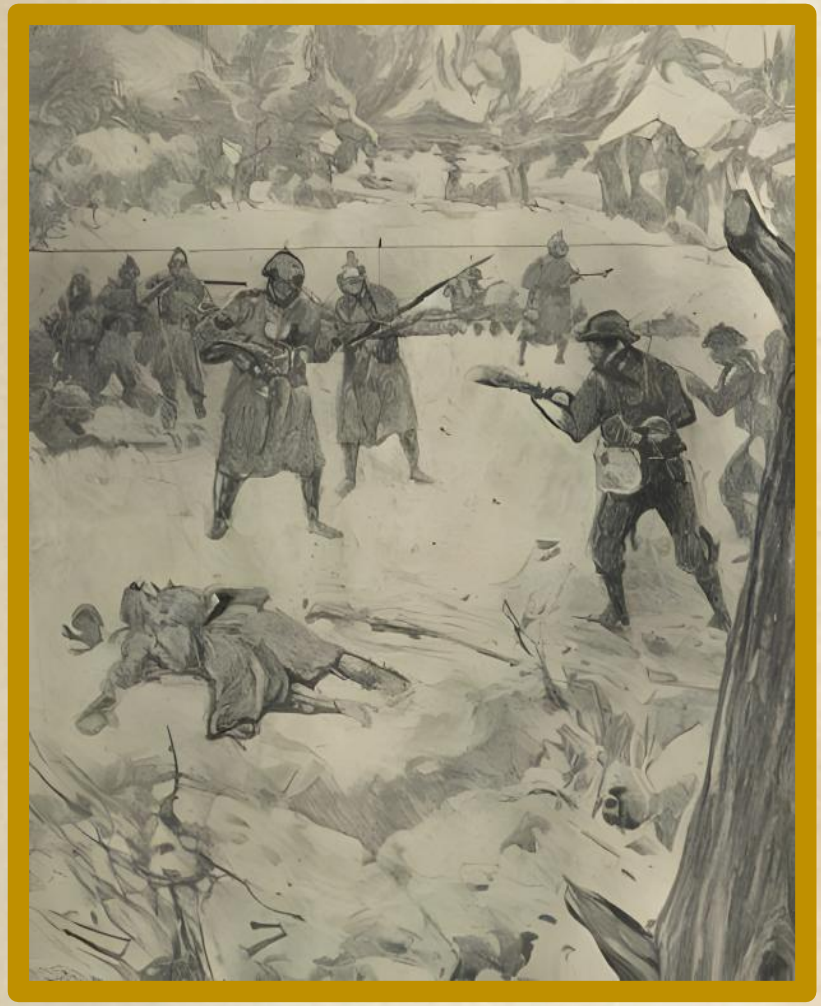


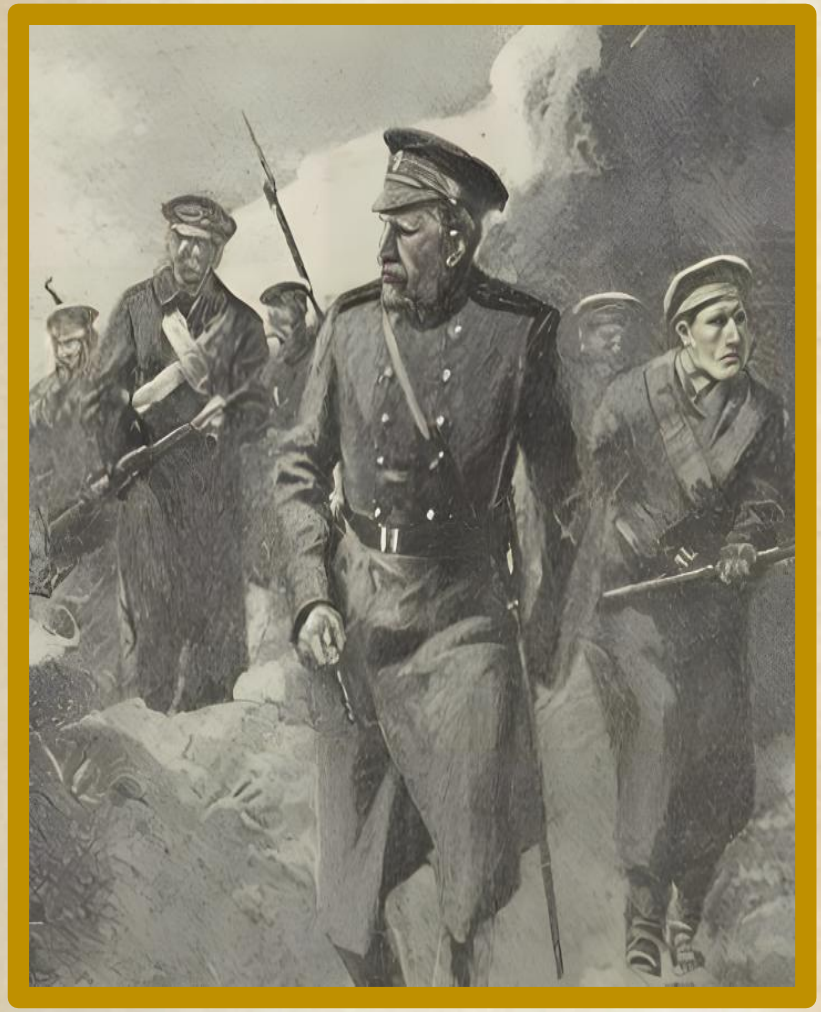


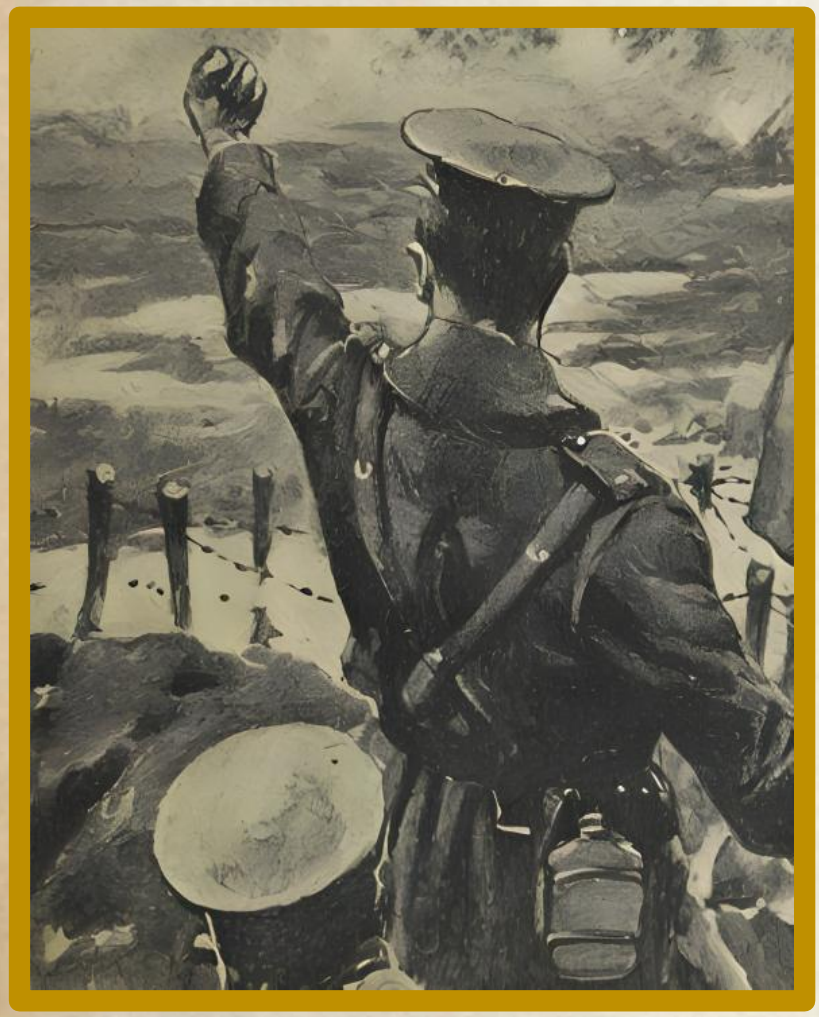


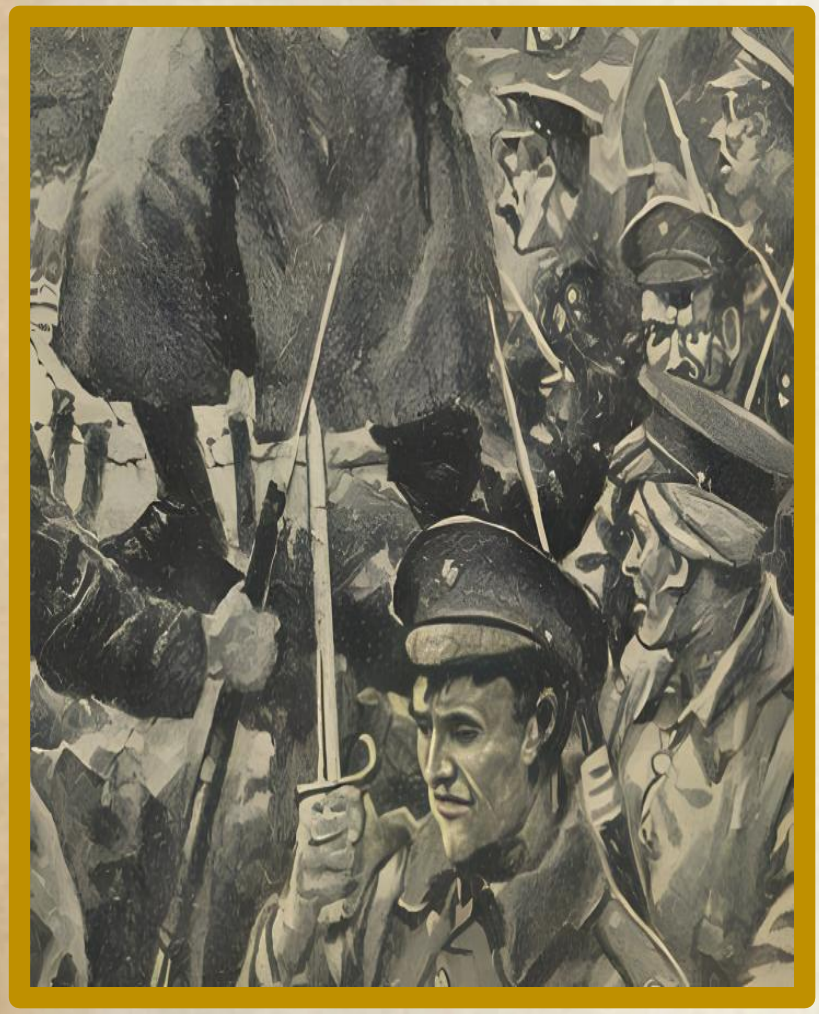


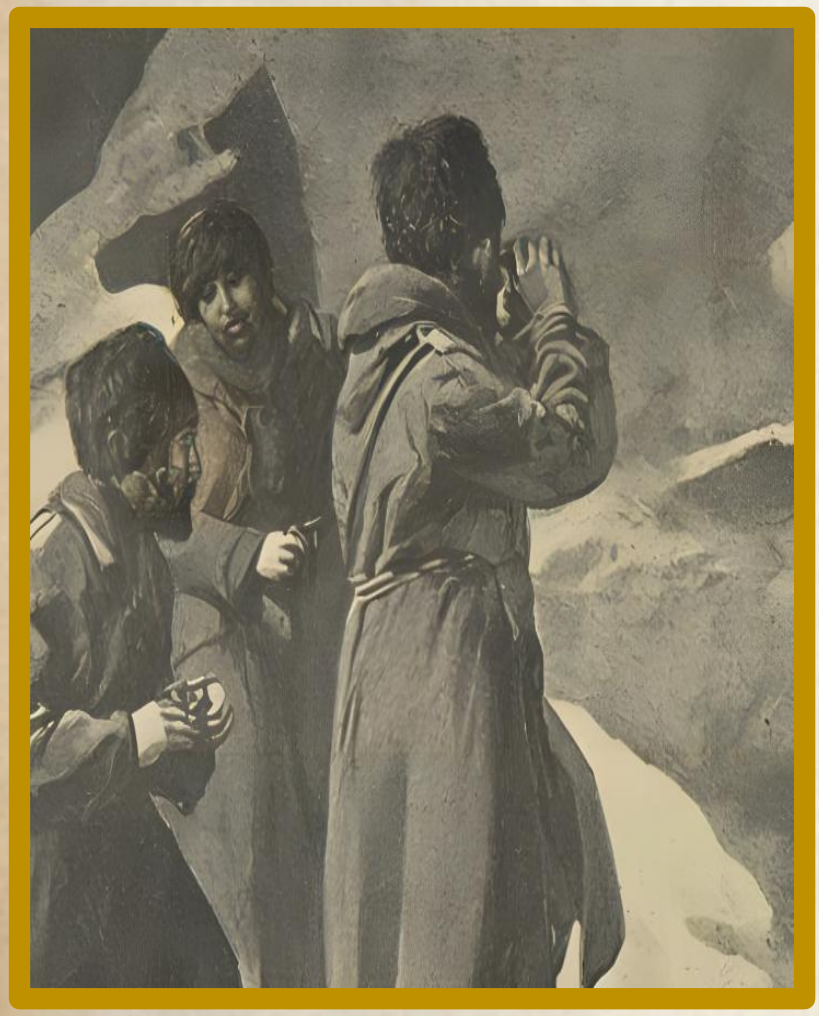


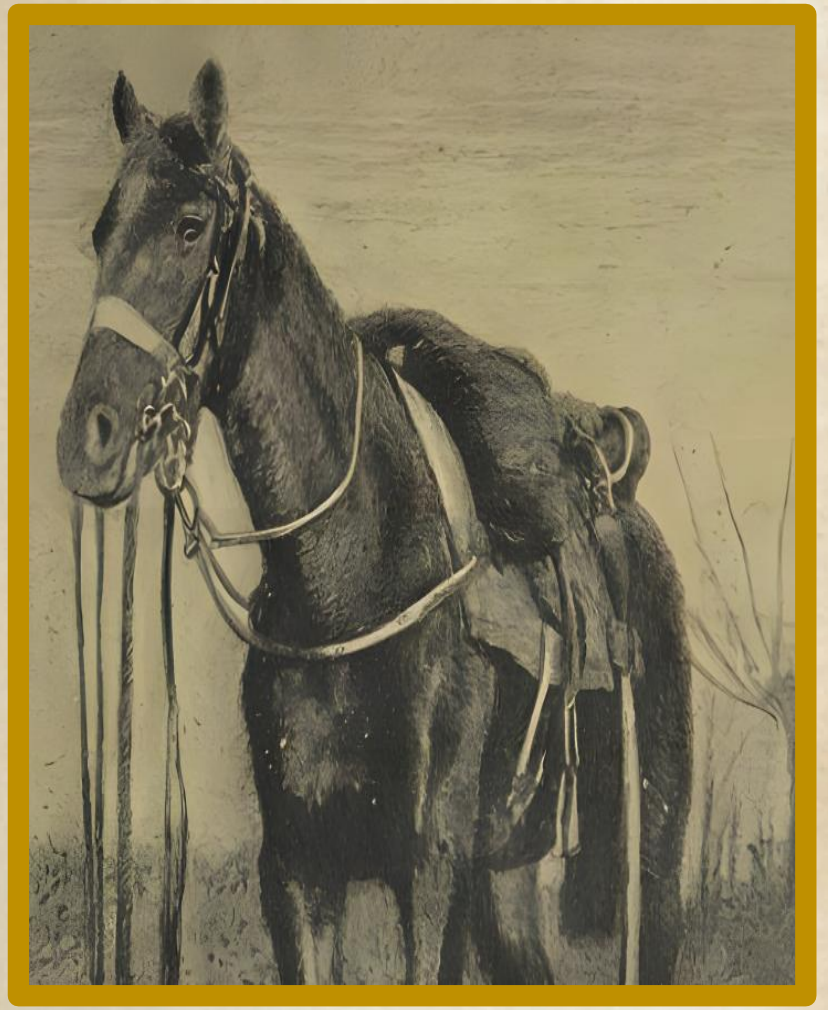


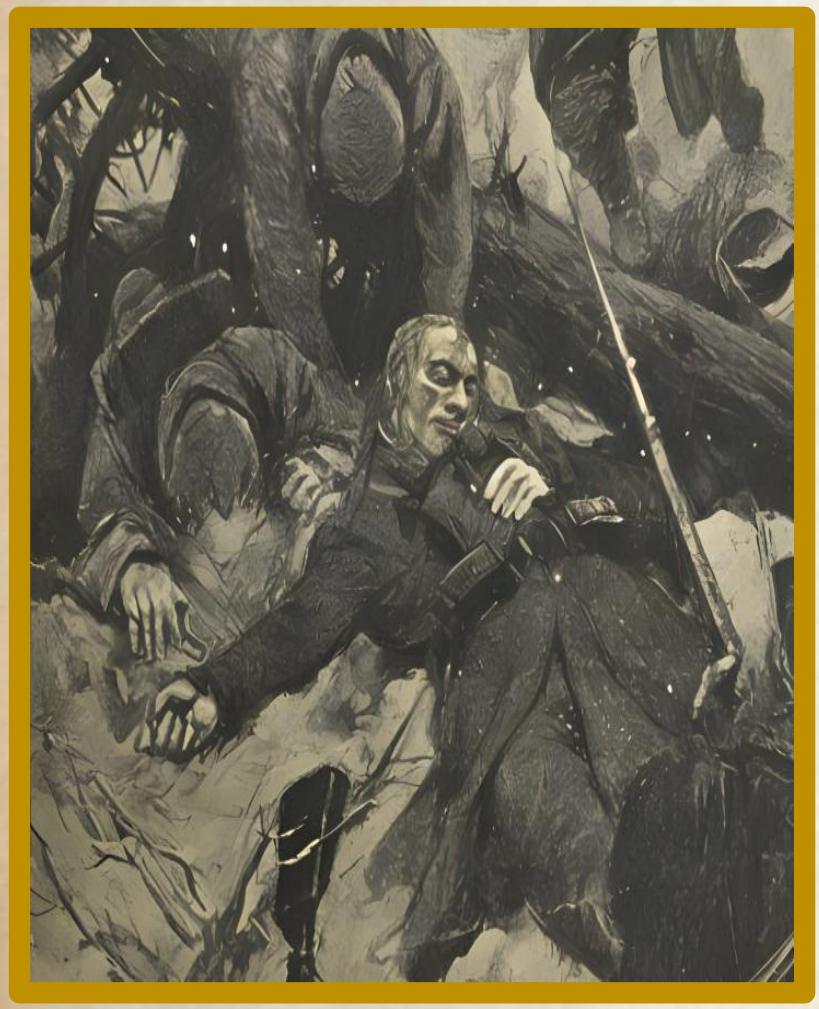


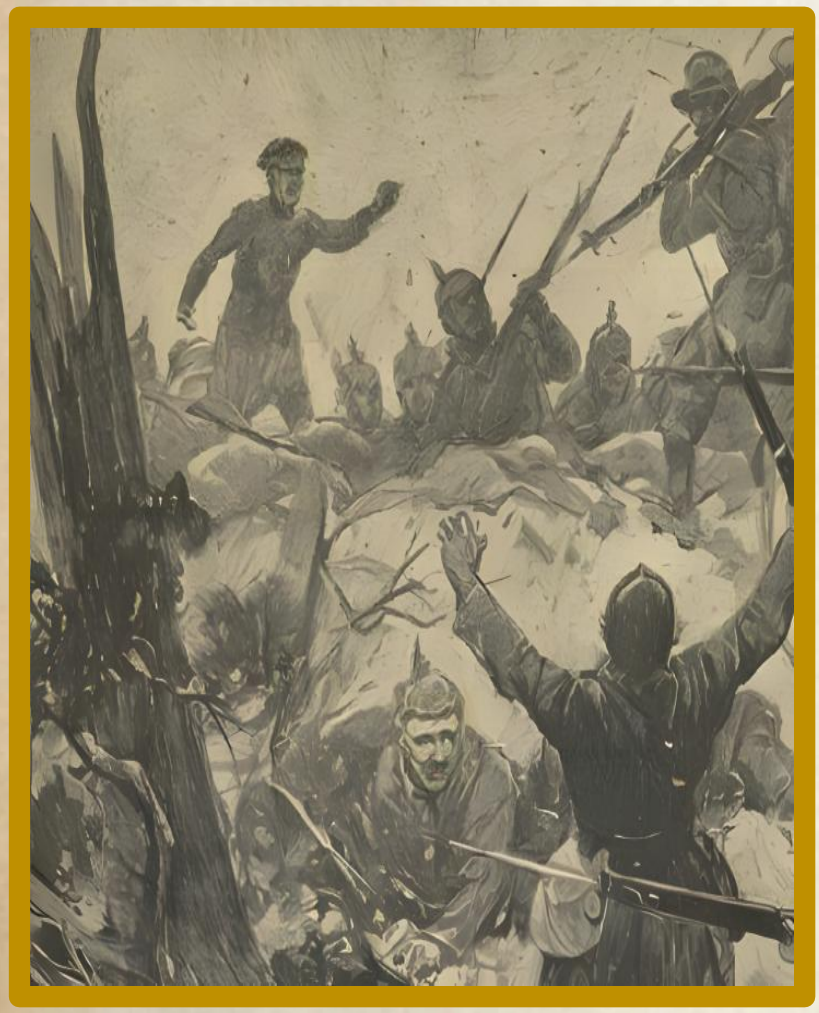


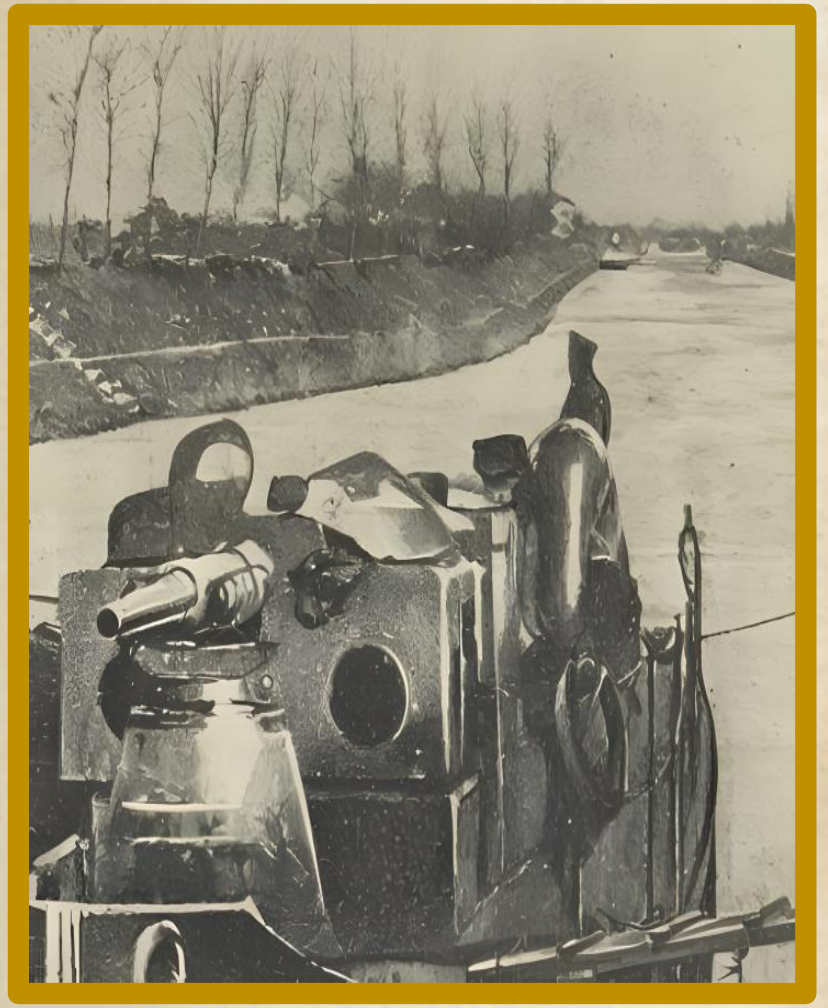


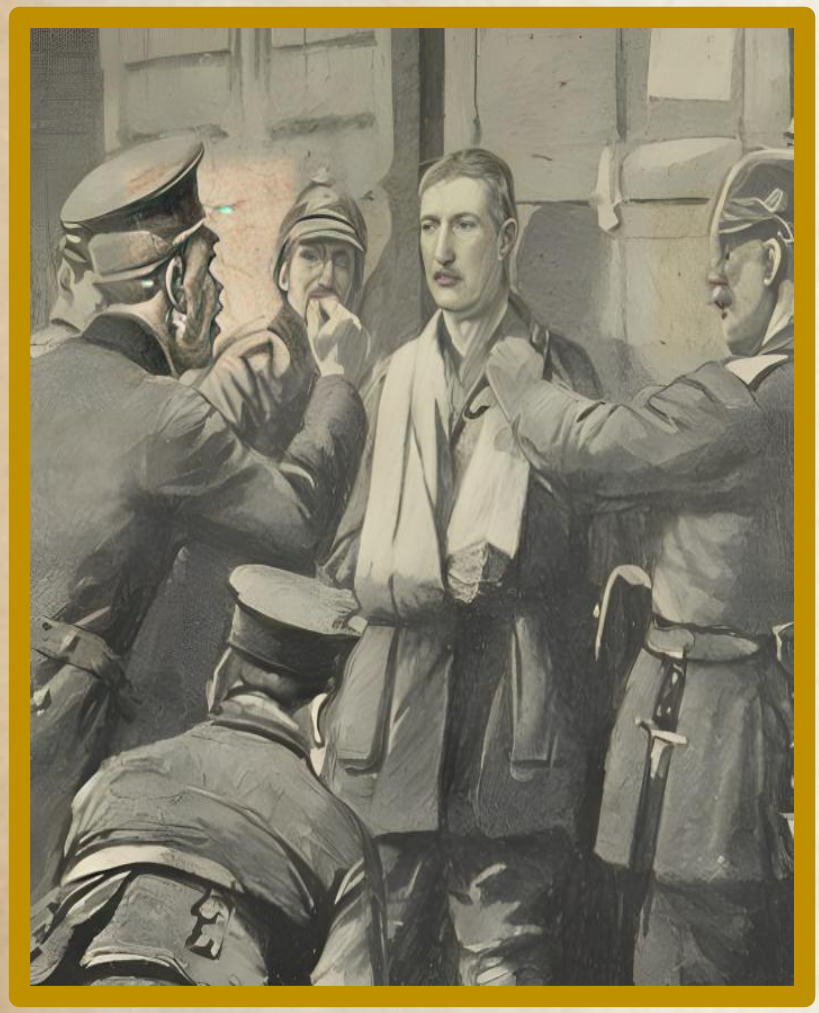












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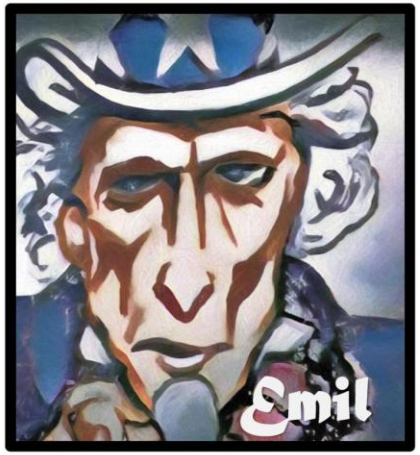

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